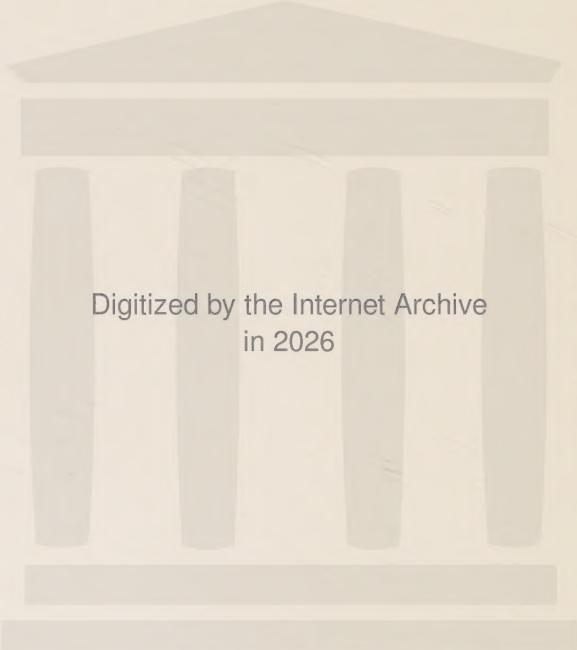


CHRIST'S MESSAGE
IN TIMES OF CRISIS

E. C. DEWICK

Douglas Greening Tucker

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CHRIST'S MESSAGE IN TIMES OF CRISIS

*Sermons preached in St. Aidan's
College Chapel, Birkenhead*

BY

E. C. DEWICK, M.A.

*Formerly Vice-Principal of St. Aidan's College and Teacher
in Ecclesiastical History in Liverpool University
Author of "Primitive Christian Eschatology"*

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TO
WILLIAM GERALD FURNESS SMITH

COLLEAGUE AND FRIEND

(TUTOR AT ST. AIDAN'S, 1913-1914
LIEUTENANT, NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE REGIMENT
KILLED IN FLANDERS, JULY 5TH, 1915)

IN THE HOPE
THAT THESE SERMONS MAY EXPRESS
SOME OF HIS IDEALS
AND SOMETHING OF
HIS SPIRIT

PREFACE.

THE sermons in this volume were addressed to a congregation composed largely, though not exclusively, of theological students. They will be found, in consequence, to deal especially with the problems which are likely to confront the rising generation of younger clergy. But these problems are of vital concern also to every thoughtful Christian man or woman who is seeking to understand the signs of the times. I have left untouched, for the most part, the local references and illustrations which reflect the "atmosphere" of college life, or which bear upon the work of pastor and priest. For clerical readers, and especially for any old St. Aidan's men into whose hands these pages may fall, I hope that the sermons may thereby gain in interest and practical value; and for a wider public I trust that their usefulness will not be lessened.

For a similar reason, and for fear of introducing an artificial tone, I have not attempted to soften the abruptness of style, which will remind the reader that they were primarily intended for oral delivery, rather than for perusal as literary essays.

Two main thoughts run through the sermons. One is the *inadequacy of the Church as she is* to meet the needs of the time, and the urgent need for a real repentance within the organised societies bearing Christ's Name, leading them to a new honesty

in facing truth, a new courage in attempting great things, and a new spirit of love among the disciples of the Master.

The other main thought is *the sufficiency of Christ* ; the conviction that in Christ, and all that He is and does and teaches, there is the secret of the world's redemption ; so that if only the Church be true to her own message, the gates of hell shall not prevail against her.

The debts of a preacher are always too many for enumeration. In a very real sense, these sermons have come *from* the very congregation to which they were preached ; for the ideas and illustrations have again and again been given to me, directly or indirectly, by college friends and pupils. To my colleagues on the staff of St. Aidan's, and particularly to the Principal, I owe a special debt in this respect ; while the dedication of this volume expresses a little of my obligation to one " who being dead yet speaketh " in the life of many of us who knew him.

I am indebted to the Editor of the *Modern Churchman* for his courtesy in allowing me to reprint the sermon on " Truthfulness in Religion," which first appeared in his magazine.

Those of my readers who are familiar with the Student Christian Movement and the various " Fellowship Movements " both within and without the Church, will realise how much these have contributed to the thoughts and aims of this volume.

E. C. D.

BLACKHEATH,

September, 1916.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

BEFORE THE GREAT WAR.

	PAGE
I. THE FIRST THING NEEDFUL IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE - - -	II
II. OLD TRADITIONS AND NEW IDEALS -	21
III. A HALF-FORGOTTEN DOCTRINE (JUSTIFI- CATION BY FAITH) - - -	33
IV. THE UNCOMPROMISING CHRIST - -	43
V. BROADMINDEDNESS AND KEENNESS -	54
VI. THE CALL TO SERVICE AND THE CLAIMS OF CHRIST - - -	62
VII. WHERE CHRIST IS TO BE FOUND IN MODERN LIFE (<i>an Easter-tide Sermon</i>)	72
VIII. SELF-DEVELOPMENT OR SELF-SACRIFICE ?	82

PART II.

WAR-TIME SERMONS.

IX. THE CHURCH'S MESSAGE TO THE ENGLISH PEOPLE - - -	95
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X.	THE DANGERS OF REACTION IN WAR- TIME - - - -	105
XI.	THE CHALLENGE OF THE WAR TO A DIVIDED CHRISTENDOM - -	114
XII.	THE REDEMPTION OF THE WORLD BY THE LIFE OF CHRIST - -	125
XIII.	THE THRESHOLDS OF LIFE - -	136
XIV.	TRUTHFULNESS IN RELIGION - -	144
XV.	STEPHEN AND PAUL—THE FRUITS OF MARTYRDOM - - - -	154
XVI.	JOHN WESLEY—A HERALD OF SPIRITUAL REVIVAL - - - -	163
XVII.	THE NATIONAL MISSION AND THE CALL TO REPENTANCE - - - -	174
XVIII.	A CHURCH THAT CAN OVERCOME THE WORLD - - - -	185
XIX.	THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE -	194
XX.	THE BOUNDLESS SOVEREIGNTY OF CHRIST (<i>an Ascension-tide Sermon</i>)	203

PART I.

SERMONS PREACHED BEFORE THE GREAT
WAR.

I.

THE FIRST THING NEEDFUL IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

October 15th, 1911.

ACTS XIX. 2.

"Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? . . . We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."

MOST of us, when we read this passage in the Authorised Version of our Bibles, are inclined, I think, to feel a little surprise at the ignorance displayed by these disciples at Ephesus. It comes almost as a shock to our feelings to hear of men, on the verge of Christian baptism, who "had not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."

Perhaps it is partly in consequence of this feeling of surprise that the Revised Version has altered the answer of these disciples, thus: "We did not so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost *was given*." But this alteration, though frequently defended, has been subjected to trenchant criticism,* as an evasion of the plain meaning of St. Luke's words. The criticism appears to me to be justified;

* See (e.g.) T. E. Page's "Commentary on Acts," p. 204.

and so I shall not scruple to-day to keep to the old rendering : " We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."

Probably all of us would agree that ignorance such as this is lamentable in the extreme, and calls for an immediate remedy. But, supposing that those disciples had *heard of* the Holy Spirit, and had been taught the doctrine of His Person and Work, but had not *received* Him into their hearts ; would their condition then strike us as equally reprehensible, and equally demanding prompt measures to set things right ? Would not many of us have said under those circumstances : " Well, at least these disciples have been well grounded in the elements of the Christian Faith ; and for the rest, we must wait " ? And we should have waited, quite contentedly, without feeling that anything was seriously wrong.

But what did St. Paul do in the case of these disciples at Ephesus ? Did he proceed at once to expound to them the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and then cease, holding that he had done all that was required of him ? Listen to St. Luke's record :

" He said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized ? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came on them ; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

In other words, Paul (so far as we read) does not dwell upon any lengthy doctrinal exposition; he passes on rapidly to the means by which they receive the Holy Spirit. Surely we cannot but conclude that for St. Paul the question of supreme moment is, not whether the Holy Spirit has been heard of, but whether He has been received. No doubt it was a necessary preliminary that they should hear of the existence of the Holy Spirit; and, we may add, that they should show faith and trust in Him—for the New Testament knows nothing of grace given apart from faith. But the knowledge, and even the faith, are not ends in themselves, but means to an end; and that end is the reception of the Holy Spirit. Only when those disciples had actually received the Holy Spirit did St. Paul feel that his mission to them was fulfilled; only then did they take up their full privilege as members of the Church of Christ.

Now, if St. Paul's question were put to us: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" what would our answer be?

It would certainly not be the answer which was given by the disciples at Ephesus. With the words of the Nicene Creed fresh in our ears: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life," not one of us could answer: "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."

But have ye *received* the Holy Ghost since ye believed? Did ye *ever* receive the Holy Ghost at any time in your life?

Perhaps some of us, if we were to express quite frankly the thoughts of our hearts, would reply to that question somewhat as follows:

“ I should not venture to speak of *myself* as receiving the Holy Spirit of God ! That phrase may be all very well if applied to saints and specially holy people ; but not for me ! I daresay I am not as good as I ought to be ; but at least I shall not pretend to be better than my neighbours ; and certainly I shall not presume to use of myself such a high-flown term as ‘receiving the Holy Spirit ! ’ ”

But think a moment. If you have a poor little plant which has been kept indoors, all weedy and shrivelled from lack of light and moisture, and someone says to you, “ Why don’t you put it outside, where it will get more sun and rain ? ” would you say, “ Oh, I wouldn’t think of putting a wretched little plant like that out in the sunshine and rain ; it would be presumptuous to expect the sun and the rain to trouble themselves about such a miserable object ! If it were a splendid rhododendron-tree, of course it would be different ! ”

You would rightly describe such an answer as exceedingly foolish ; but it is not more foolish than to suppose that there is anything presumptuous in expecting that the Spirit of God will enter into an unworthy human heart. The Spirit of God, like the sunshine and the rain, is not eked out with a sparing hand, lest the supply should run short ; for “ God giveth not the Spirit by measure.” Indeed it is just where the need is greatest that the gift of God is most freely bestowed. Surely those who talk glibly of the “ presumption ” or the “ cant ” of claiming to receive the Spirit of God are themselves the most guilty of presumption. For, if a Sovereign offers an honour to a subject,

which is the greater presumption, to accept, or to refuse? Surely, to refuse; for refusal indicates an inability to appreciate or to value the honour offered. And those who maintain that they are not good enough to receive the gift of God's Spirit which He offers them, are really showing others that they do not care for the gift, or perhaps that they do not intend to lead a life worthy of so high a profession. But remember, if we decline to rise to the position to which our God calls us, and if we shirk the responsibilities which He would lay upon us, it is we who are showing a spirit of self-satisfied presumption, and not those who respond to the call. If our character is not good enough now to receive the Spirit of God, do we seriously think that it will develop and raise itself by its own efforts, if we decline to admit the uplifting power of Him who is the Lord and Giver of Life?

To decline the gift of the Spirit on the grounds of our own unworthiness is really to mistake the Divine *motive* which prompts the Divine gift. If God were to offer us His Spirit from any motive less than pure love, it might be true that our sinful hearts ought to shrink from the thought of contact with the All-Holy. But love—even human love, when it is at its best—is utterly unsullied by contact with the sinner. What nobler examples of Christian love can be seen anywhere than among those who live and work in the slums of our great cities, in the very strongholds of squalor and sin, in order to bring men and women from darkness to light, from the slavery of sin to the freedom of Christian liberty? Is that love dishonoured because it is in daily touch with sin? No; the only thing that can dull its

brightness is the refusal of its message, the repulse of its efforts.

Then shall the Divine Love, which sends us the Holy Spirit, be dishonoured by contact with the sinful hearts of men? God forbid! Nay, those who slight God's love are those who with a false humility profess that they are not worthy to receive it. Let us not forget the stern words with which Christ described the doom of the soul that will not receive God's gifts: "He that hath, to him shall be given; but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath."

"Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" There is another answer which, if I mistake not, would come from the heart of many a respectable church-goer: "I suppose I did; anyway, I was baptized, and I was always taught that the Holy Spirit is given in baptism; so I suppose I received Him then."

Is not that the feeling of many baptized Church-people? They accept what they have been taught as to the gift of the Holy Ghost in baptism; but in practical experience they have never been conscious of possessing that gift.

Now I do not intend this morning to enter into the difficult question of the gift of the Spirit in baptism. But this I would say: that anyone who, although he has never felt the Spirit of God stirring in his heart, and never known the sense of a power from without himself, guiding his life to higher things, yet fancies that because he was baptized as a child he *must* be right in God's sight—that person is trusting to a delusion and a snare.

Many people seem to imagine that the gift of

God's Spirit is something given to them without their knowledge, not necessarily exercising any practical effect upon the heart and life, but yet in some mysterious—not to say magical—way, guaranteeing them salvation and eternal life.

Now the effects of such a belief are disastrous in the extreme. For one thing, it tends to create an unreal, artificial atmosphere which the world is quick to detect. Men and women come to church and sing of the priceless gift of the Spirit which has been given them; and the world watches their lives and sees very little that marks them out from others who do not claim to possess that gift. The world asks of us Christians—and is it such an unreasonable demand?—"If God has really given you the best of all gifts, why do you not show us the best of all types of life?" That is just what the Christians did show in the days when St. Paul put the question of our text to those disciples at Ephesus. Then, the results of the gift of the Spirit were seen, and seen at once, in *a changed life*. The Christian community was unmistakably a brotherhood of mutual sympathy and love, such as could be found nowhere outside. Each member of that community had experienced a personal change of life when he received the Holy Spirit.

Thank God, even among the streets of our English towns, there are men and women—more than we might think—who have known the power of the Holy Spirit just as really in their own lives. Men in the grip of drink or lust have been freed, and have regained self-control; women have been lifted up from the depths and raised to self-respect and the fear of God; homes which were dens of

misery have been cleansed and made into bright centres of life and love. Besides these, there are countless others who have experienced a gradual transformation of their ideals and habits of life, which, though less dramatic, is in no way less real a change.

Ask those whose lives have been changed in this way: "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" and will *they* answer with perfunctory listlessness, "I suppose so"? No! no more than the sufferer who has been completely relieved by an operation from some terrible pain will tell you that he *supposes* he has been healed. No, indeed! They will tell you that of all things they have experienced, nothing is so intensely real as the coming into their hearts of the Spirit of God, who changed their lives.

"A changed life"—that was the keynote of Christian character in the days of St. Paul; it was the keynote of St. Paul's own character; and it would be well if it were equally prominent in our modern Christianity.

You may call it "Conversion," you may call it "a fresh start in life," you may call it "the New Birth"—I do not care what name is used; but I do care for *the thing itself*. For so long as many of our church-goers (and must I not add, of our communicants?) are uncertain in their heart of hearts whether or no they have really been influenced by the Spirit of God, and find it hard to say honestly that their lives have been changed and uplifted by His Power, can we wonder if the world is inclined not to take our expression of belief in the Holy Spirit very seriously; can we wonder if men think

that our religion is a religion of make-believe? But let us once be firmly assured that the Spirit of God is with us and in us, inspiring us, guiding us, uplifting us, and it will not be long ere others catch our enthusiasm, and the sacred fire of the Spirit will spread from heart to heart.

One word of warning. I believe that there are some who dare not believe that the Holy Spirit has been given them, because they know only too well that the battle within is not yet altogether won. But while we ought to be convinced of our own inspiration, this does not mean that we ought to think of ourselves as freed by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit from the lifelong war with the forces of evil. St. Paul believed intensely in his own inspiration; yet he was keenly conscious of the life-long battle with sin: "Not as though I *had already* attained, or as though I *were already* made perfect." For the gift of the Holy Spirit is not meant to relieve us of the struggle; nay, rather to strengthen us that we may conquer in the struggle.

There is much truth in the bold words which Myers puts into the mouth of St. Paul:

"Ay, and for me there shot from the beginning,
Pulses of passion broken with my breath.
O, thou poor soul, enwrapped in such a sinning,
Bound in the shameful body of thy death!
Well, let me sin, but not with my consenting!
Well, let me die, but willing to be whole!
Never, O Christ—so stay me from relenting—
Shall there be truce betwixt my flesh and soul!"

Yes, it is only those who have made the awful truce between flesh and soul, and whose higher nature has ceased to struggle against the lower—it is only

these who have shut out the Holy Spirit from their hearts. For all others, there is the Divine Helper, and there is hope.

But how shall we best describe the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, so that when He comes we may know Him? To describe Him fully were impossible, for there is something in the knowledge of God that no man can explain. But there is one—and perhaps only one—word which, when applied to God, never seems to be inadequate, or to need re-statement; and that is the word “Love.”

So, be sure of this: that whenever and however Love comes into your hearts—Love that takes you out of yourself and gives you wide sympathies and great visions—Love that makes you follow in the footsteps of the Son of God and try to spend your life in the service of your brethren and His brethren; then He who is moving in your heart is none other than the Spirit of the Most High God. For God is Love.

II.

OLD TRADITIONS AND NEW IDEALS.

November 10th, 1912.

2 KINGS II. 9.

"Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me."

AN old man, who has been a strong, masterful leader in a great cause, has reached the time when he must resign his leadership into the hands of a younger man. Who is there that does not feel for him a deep sympathy in this trial of his—a sympathy which overrides all feelings of personal like or dislike of his methods and his aims? Many a great political cartoon came from the pen of Sir John Tenniel in the nineteenth century; but scarce one touched the imagination of the British public more deeply than that strong, simple sketch at the time of Bismarck's retirement, entitled "Dropping the Pilot." You remember it?—the stern figure of Bismarck, the old pilot of the German Empire, slowly descending the ladder from off the deck of the great vessel he had steered so long, down into the little pilot's boat of private retirement. That

cartoon made men forget their judgments of Bismarck in their sympathy for an old man at the close of a life-work.

But scarcely less deep is the sympathy we feel for a young life taking up the reins of leadership for the first time. Who has not heard of the first Council of Queen Victoria—how the hard, worldly politicians found themselves strangely moved as they looked on the slight girlish figure of their Queen, just lately called to undertake so vast a responsibility !

An old leader resigning a life-work—a young leader undertaking a life-work—both are among those things which are full of an intense human interest ; for they are landmarks, not only in the history of the men themselves, but in the history of the causes—often of national or even world-wide importance—for which they work.

An old leader resigning—a young leader succeeding—both are brought before us in the second chapter of the Second Book of Kings.

The old leader is Elijah, the champion of Jehovah in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation ; Elijah, the strong, impulsive man, whose courage had ebbed and flowed like a tidal wave, now challenging the whole world single-handed on Carmel, now crying in the wilderness like a tired child in the bitter reaction of disappointment ; Elijah, the prophet whose life-work, for all its failings, had been so great that without it, humanly speaking, the very name of Jehovah might well have been forgotten by His chosen people—so great, that on the Mount of Transfiguration he stood by Moses' side as the second national saviour. Such was the man

who had now come to the end of his strong, stormy life's work. And he knew it. So he takes with him Elisha, the young ploughman whom God had called from his father's farm-land to be Elijah's successor, and to carry on that work of reformation which Elijah had begun. Together they go forth, visiting first those "schools of the prophets" on which doubtless Elijah's hopes were largely resting for the future maintenance of the great principles for which he had fought. And now the last of these visits is completed; Jordan has been crossed; and, as the two men go onward and upward into the barren hill-country before them, they feel that the end is very near indeed. So the old man turns to the younger: "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken from thee." "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me!"

It was a request full of humility—the request of a son asking for the portion of the first-born with a deep sense of filial dependence and filial reverence. There is no trace of shallow self-sufficiency here. Elijah, at least at that stage of history, is the greater and the wiser man of the two, and Elisha, his successor, is the first to recognise this. And it was a request full of insight. Elisha does not ask for any of the secondary elements of his predecessor's greatness; he does not fix upon his wild, impressive manner, his courage, his eloquence; but he goes at once to the heart of the matter, to the secret which underlay all Elijah's power: "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy *spirit* be upon me!" If only he could win Elijah's spirit, he knew he would be able rightly to carry on Elijah's work.

You remember the sequel. The request is granted, on one condition—that Elisha remains with his master till the end. That condition is fulfilled; and as Elisha crosses back to the prophetic school at Jericho, he is met by the students there with a cry that welcomed him as the new champion of Jehovah: “The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha!” And it was true. In spite of the outward contrast between Elijah and Elisha—the one a man of the desert, the other a man of the world—yet the underlying motive—the “*spirit*”—is the same in both.

“The single aim of Elisha is to complete the reforms begun by Elijah.” If we read the story of Elisha’s life, we find that the faithful remnant in Israel instinctively looked to Elisha, just as before they had looked to Elijah, as the chief messenger of God to their day and generation. The spirit of Elisha *was* the spirit of Elijah; because in both men dwelt the Spirit of the Lord God Jehovah.

.

Is not the story of Elijah and Elisha a parable of history? One generation succeeds to another, and none is altogether like to that which has gone before. But in the heart of each generation of God’s servants, as they come near to passing away, there is the earnest desire to leave some influence for good upon the rising generation that is succeeding to the work. “Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken from thee.”

Often, the older generation fervently hopes that *no* change may be necessary; that even the forms

and details of the "good old times" may be preserved intact for ever. But the younger generation knows that this cannot be so. New voices are calling, new visions are seen; and the new voices and the new visions are not always those of the world, the flesh, and the devil, but sometimes those of the God who speaks at sundry times and in divers manners. Yet though the old order *must* change and give place to new, surely each younger generation will do well to look up to those who are nearing the end of their pilgrimage, with the prayer of Elisha: "Let a double portion of your spirit be upon us!"

Brothers, you and I are called to take up the work of the Christian ministry at the hands of those who have gone before us—called to be, in some measure, the new leaders of Christian life in the English Church of the twentieth century. And some of us find—do we not?—that the old and the new are sometimes hard to blend in our thoughts and in our teaching. Even as our fathers moved in some matters away from the position where our grandfathers stood, so we have followed their example. Some things which seemed vital to the older generation appear to us to be of secondary moment; other ideals, which to us are instinct with the voice and call of God, are foreign and meaningless to our predecessors.

Perhaps it has always been so. Perhaps ever since the world began the movement of thought has caused perplexity and pain; but certainly in our day the perplexity is often very real and the pain very acute.

Sometimes it is the case of a lad brought up in a sober church-going home who has been fired with the enthusiasm for work in the foreign field or in some dark slum parish. To him the call is clear and strong ; but the old folks at home cannot understand it ; *they* did not so learn the obligations of a Christian life in their younger days ; and why, they ask, should the home-peace be broken for the sake of these new visionary ideals ?

Or perhaps the trouble has come through the influx of new views as to the inspiration of Scripture. Those who hold them may claim that they have gained thereby a clearer and more intelligent vision of God's hand in the onward march of history, that their faith is not weakened but strengthened by the change of outlook. But to the older generation it seems as though the very foundations of religion were being undermined, and the very truth of God's revelation challenged by rash questionings.

So one might take many another side of life, and note how the old thought and the new are seething together and causing unrest in our modern life.

And the trouble caused is not all on one side. If to the older generation it brings perplexity and sorrows, and sometimes, perhaps, bitter anger at what seems to them the wanton perversity of present-day tendencies, that is not the whole of the tale. On the part of many a younger man there is the unsatisfied longing for a sympathy which is never given, the half-conscious sense of estrangement from those who are very near and dear to him, the feeling that his highest ideals and his deepest long-

ings can never be shared by those to whom he would most wish to turn. And these are very real troubles to many who, while sincerely loyal to the old Faith, yet feel and know that they are sons of the twentieth century.

But for us, as Christian men, it is more important to realise our responsibilities than to enlarge upon our grievances or our rights. So I pass to this consideration: What is the *duty* of those of us who are, or hope to be, among the number of the younger clergy of the present generation in our attitude towards the belief and practice of the generation before us?

First, *humility*. And true humility is very close akin to love; for love (St. Paul tells us) "is not puffed up." There is a special temptation for some of us younger men to make a great profession of up-to-date views, not so much because we really believe them to be true, but because we think they will draw attention to ourselves as "bold thinkers" and "broad-minded men." Such a motive is unworthy of an admirer of Elisha—let alone of a follower of Jesus Christ. Another subtle temptation meets us in the tendency (some say it is specially prevalent among the clergy) to disparage the work of those who have preceded us. The young man who takes up some branch of ministerial work, instead of praying for a double portion of his predecessor's spirit, says: "My predecessor in the parish really did *nothing*!" or, "He had the most *hopelessly* old-fashioned views—*nobody* holds them now!" Sometimes, of course, it is true; often, it is not true; but is it *ever* in accordance with the mind of Christ to speak thus of those who

are our forefathers in God? Let us pray then, first of all, that God will give us younger men humility—humility blended with love, that we may never cause to stumble, by rash words of ours, any servant of God whose age claims our respect and our deference.

Next, let us pray for *honesty*. Humility without conviction or courage will sap the nerve and paralyse the life. The men whom God needs to-day are men of strong, independent thought and honest frankness of speech. Am I not right in saying that there is a widespread feeling to-day that some of the clergy—especially the younger clergy—are not always quite *honest* in their preaching: that, on the one hand, they are using conventional language which scarcely represents their own beliefs and experiences, and that on the other hand they are keeping back ideas and ideals which are vital to themselves—from fear of provoking hostile criticism? And, if so, surely it is not well. Whatever be the difficulties of our ministry under present-day conditions, these cannot be the right solutions. It cannot be God's will that His ministers should appear more orthodox than they are, or should keep back part of the counsel of God as He has revealed it to their hearts. Honesty is not less essential than humility for us of the younger generation.

But how shall we combine the two in our attitude towards older types of thought? It is no easy question to answer. But perhaps it may help us if we realise that the same problem presented itself (I say it in all reverence) in the life of our Lord.

Turn to the story of our Lord staying behind

in the Temple, in the second chapter of St. Luke, and at once we are face to face with the old perplexity and trouble. We see Mary and Joseph vaguely conscious that behind the strange conduct of the boy Jesus there must be some motive they cannot fathom ; we hear the perplexed cry of the mother—and how often has it been echoed since, when the first signs of independence have shown themselves!—"Son, why hast Thou dealt thus with us?" Can we doubt that that cry of sorrow went home with real pain to the heart of the Divine Son, as it told Him of the loneliness of a mother who feels that her thoughts are no longer her son's thoughts? But notice how He meets his parents' trouble with a wondrous blending of humility and honesty. "He went down to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." There is the humility; yet He never swerves in His loyalty to His God-given vocation, and to the end He never ceased "to be about His Father's business."

We need humility, and we need honesty, if we are rightly to take up our work of ministry as true successors of those who have gone before; and we also need *insight*—the power to distinguish what is essential from that which is but of secondary importance. Elisha, you will remember, showed that insight in his request to Elijah: "Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." And may we not pray a similar prayer? We look back to the various types of Churchmanship which belong to our fathers' generation—the old-fashioned Evangelical, the old-fashioned Tractarian, the old-fashioned Liberal. We feel instinctively that the times have changed; we could not be altogether

like any one of them if we would ; perhaps we would not if we could. But if God gives us insight, we can look beneath the outward forms of those old-fashioned lives and see the spirit that lay beneath—and we see that it is the Spirit of Christ. They, at their best, were trying to show Christ in various ways and forms to their generation ; and is not that just what we are trying to do for our generation, too ? And so we pray that a double portion of their spirit—Christ's Spirit—may rest on us, their successors in the ministry.

It is so easy, among the many fascinating side-issues of modern thought, to forget that the one great purpose for which the Christian minister lives and works is to show forth *Christ* by word and by life ; and that he who fails to do this, however learned, however broad-minded, however original, is no true successor in the line of the Christian ministry, no true inheritor of its spirit.

May I recall to you Ian Maclaren's tale* of the young Scottish minister, John Carmichael, just appointed to his new parish ? He has prepared his first sermon with laborious care ; it is a model of learning and scholarship, a full statement of the present position of theological thought, interspersed with quotations from the very latest German criticism—quite an epoch-making production, in fact. And then, on the Friday night, he is enlarging on the great sermon to his old aunt who keeps house for him, and he sees that she is not quite easy in her mind. He presses her to speak out, and at last she tells him : “ Ye'll say what's right, I'm sure of that ; but oh, laddie, be sure ye say a

* In “ Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush.”

good word for Jesus Christ!" The young minister goes out, and up to his study. He turns over once more the pages of the great sermon, and then steadily, deliberately, he places it on the fire, and watches the pages with their forceful arguments shrivel up and disappear. And on the Sunday he preaches another sermon; and the subject was not modern thought, nor yet the folly of old-fashioned views, but the eternal gospel of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

And as the elders left the kirk that day, none spake a word save one, and all that he said was this: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John."

Then do you remember the next chapter? It seems to me to express almost perfectly the thought I would leave with you. The first flush of enthusiasm has partly died away, and the young minister—perhaps through his own fault—has become estranged from an old member of his flock, a Celt of the straitest sect of Calvinism. For many weeks the old man and the young speak not a word to each other, but in the heart of each there is a great yearning sorrow. Then at last the young minister seeks out the old Highlander, and asks his forgiveness for his own lack of courtesy and respect. Glad indeed and ready is the response; and, as the two kneel together in the cottage, it is the young man who prays for grace to keep the Faith once delivered to the saints, and it is the old man who prays that they may be led forward into all the truth.

Brothers, God has called us to the ministry in a day when it is not always easy for a thoughtful

man to be loyal to the old ways and at the same time responsive to new inspiration. Pray that He who has thus called us may give us that grace which is needful to face these difficulties aright—humility, and honesty, and insight, and, above all, Love.

III.

A HALF-FORGOTTEN DOCTRINE (JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH).

February 23rd, 1913.

ROMANS V. I.

“ Justified by faith.”

It is an old-fashioned text, is it not? It speaks of an old-fashioned doctrine, or, at least, a doctrine which is very generally ignored by Christian people to-day. For most of our church-going people would admit, I think, that the doctrine of Justification by Faith has very little interest or meaning for them; and many would add that it is neither profitable nor possible to reinstate it in modern thought.

Yet the doctrine of Justification by Faith holds a place of no little importance in the teaching of the New Testament and of the English Church; it forms the main theme of one of St. Paul's greatest Epistles; it provides the title and subject for one of the Anglican Articles of Religion. So it seems not unreasonable to ask whether we are really warranted in leaving it so completely on one side in our modern thought; and whether the current

neglect may not be an indication of the need for re-interpretation, rather than a proof of the needlessness of further attention to the subject. I am going to ask you, therefore, to bear with me while we examine a little more closely this half-forgotten doctrine of Justification by Faith.

First, let us try to understand some of the reasons why it has come to be so generally ignored. Partly, this is due to the technical language of the phrase. Neither "justification" nor "faith" are words commonly used in our modern vocabulary; they belong to the language of the theologian, which is generally "not understood of the people." So when the average man is confronted by the phrase "Justification by Faith," he is inclined to dismiss it off-hand as a meaningless jargon.

But supposing that we try to translate the phrase into intelligible modern English, and instead of "justification by faith" put "*forgiven through our trust*"; I do not think we shall have appreciably altered the meaning, while we shall have brought the phrase within the compass of common experience. For most of us have known what it means to be forgiven by father or mother in our own home-circle, not because of reparation done for the wrong we had committed, but simply because we came in trustful faith and asked to be forgiven. And we *were* forgiven—that is, treated as if we had not done wrong—through our trust or "faith." Now forgiveness in the home-circle corresponds very closely to "justification" in the great family of God; for when God "justifies" us, He treats us as if we had not done wrong, and "accounts us righteous" through our trust or faith in Him.

But some may say : Is this *fair* ? Is it worthy of God ?—to treat one who has sinned with the same generosity as if he had not sinned ? Does not this overthrow all ideas of justice and equity ? Well, let us remember that the same difficulty lies involved in every act of human forgiveness. If forgiveness were never bestowed until the wrongdoer had paid off all his debts, and so brought his merits up to the level of those of his righteous neighbour, would it be forgiveness at all ? It would have lost all the distinctive characteristics of forgiveness, and would be merely an act of simple justice. The whole essence of forgiveness is that it is an act of free generosity towards one who does not, in logical justice, deserve it. Are you, then, prepared to say that forgiveness is not fair, and therefore *wrong* ? When the father forgave the Prodigal Son, and treated him as if he had never run away—was that wrong ? When your friend comes to you asking for your forgiveness, are you to check your generous impulse with the reflection that it would not be fair to treat the past as if it had never been ? Surely the outcome of such action would be to deprive our human life of one of its noblest features—the right to forgive. And even if the right to forgive does not appear to be consonant with our conception of strict justice, I think most of us would feel that the solution is to be found rather by modifying our conceptions of justice than by surrendering our right to forgive.

But if the right to forgive is inherent in human nature, it is surely unreasonable to deny the same right to God. If a human father may, on occasion, treat his children as if they had not done wrong,

surely our Father in Heaven may do likewise, granting to His children the free gift of forgiveness or justification.

Another objection sometimes brought against "Justification by Faith" is this: "It seems to make the Christian life so *easy*; trust is such a little thing, that surely God asks more from us than this!" But *is* trust a little thing? It is a simple thing, certainly; but it is also very deep, and very significant. Trustfulness, even in a little child, is a sign of character, and a secret of progress. It implies and involves *the will to believe*, which lies near to the very heart of religion. To gain the trustful spirit involves a change in our whole character and outlook; and that is much harder to achieve than a change of *conduct* in externals. "Trust" or "faith" may sound simple; but it means much—very much. Forgiveness through trust involves a far more searching test than a forgiveness awarded in return for works.

There is another ground on which indifference to the doctrine of Justification by Faith is sometimes defended. We are told that it does not really matter very much. "Do your best, and leave the rest!"

"So many faiths, so many creeds,
So many paths that wind and wind;
While just the art of being kind
Is all this sad world needs."

Men such as St. Paul and Luther were really (we are told) very foolish to excite themselves over quibbles about the phrases "by faith" or "by works"; let us be wiser, and leave them

well alone. "If it were a matter of practical importance, O ye Christians (we are told in effect), reason would that we should bear with you and your controversies; but if it be a matter of words and of names and of your theological catchwords, see ye to it; for we will be no judges of such matters."

Such a view of the matter may be plausible; but it fails to realise that the controversy between "Justification by Faith" and "Justification by Works" expresses a conflict between two widely divergent views of the meaning of life, and of the place which *forgiveness* holds in the life of a Christian. And this divergence has a practical bearing upon conduct.

For if we are justified—forgiven—by our works, then forgiveness stands at the close of our life; and our highest efforts will be to do a sufficient quantity of good during our lifetime that we may be counted worthy to receive forgiveness as our reward. Forgiveness, on this view, is the goal to be aimed for, a prize to be won in the future.

But if we are justified—forgiven—through our faith, then forgiveness forms the starting-point of the Christian life; and away from that starting-point there stretches a life of gratitude and service, not striving to earn forgiveness in the future, but only to render thanks for a forgiveness already received.

That is the issue at stake between the two phrases: "Justification by Works" and "Justification by Faith." In the one case we become good in order that some day we may be forgiven; in

the other case we are forgiven by God in order that we may become good.

I am not prepared to maintain that either view of life is entirely wrong. It seems to me that the teaching of St. James in his Epistle warns us not to condemn the idea of Justification by Works as a mere error. But I would urge that the divergence between the two views is not to be dismissed as a mere matter of "words and names"; on the contrary, it goes very deep, and our own choice in this matter will colour our whole outlook on life. For my own part, I believe that St. Paul's doctrine of Justification by Faith is the more satisfying, more profound, and more ennobling of the two. And this for several reasons.

In the first place, because it purifies our motives. If we expect to be justified by works, then all the good that we do will be tinged with an element of selfishness; for our good deeds will bring profit to ourselves, in that they help us to earn the great blessing of forgiveness. The well-known lines :

" Whatever, Lord, we lend to Thee
Repaid a thousandfold will be ;
Then gladly will we lend to Thee . . . "

often shock even the most impassive of church-goers by their prosaically financial outlook on things spiritual; but really they are only the logical outcome of a doctrine of justification by works. You know how we resent the courtesy of friends if we suspect that behind the smile lies the expectation of favours to come! And I cannot think that God will value highly good deeds done merely or chiefly in the hope that they will be

repaid a thousandfold. "If ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? Do not even the sinners the same?"

But if "justification" or "forgiveness" is God's gift bestowed on us at the outset of our life, as soon as ever we turn to Him in childlike trust, then only one motive for a life-work is left to us, and that is the motive of love and gratitude. "What reward shall I render unto the Lord, for all the benefits that He hath done unto me?" So we go forth, with hearts purged from every taint of selfishness, striving not to *gain* the best for ourselves, but to *give* the best we can, in gratitude to our Father in Heaven. Is not this the noblest ideal of life? And are we wise in ignoring a doctrine from which such an ideal springs?

Once more, the doctrine of Justification by Faith is valuable because in practice it is the strongest power for good in human life; *it produces the best results*. It is true, no doubt, that a belief in Justification by Works affords a strong motive for well-doing; for self-interest is unquestionably a big factor in human life. But the belief that we are "forgiven through our trust" has this clear advantage, that it gives new confidence, and takes away the feeling of constant anxiety and misgiving. We all know how difficult it is to give our whole mind to any work while we are harassed and troubled by anxiety about the future.

Now, it is no less difficult for the Christian to give his best powers to a life of service if he has constant doubts about his own future salvation. But let him once be reassured of his own forgiveness through his faith, just as a little child rests

in perfect trust on hearing the father's assurance of forgiveness, and he is then free to give his whole energies to his life-work. Because he has received "pardon and peace," he is able "to serve with a quiet mind," living a life that is joyful, and therefore useful to his fellow-men.

But perhaps you will say, "Is it not rather presumptuous to be so confident of forgiveness received and salvation assured?" Is it presumptuous of children to trust their father? Is not the presumption rather to be ascribed to those who decline to trust, and rest on their own powers?

It would be presumptuous (and contrary to Christian experience) to say that the forgiveness, once received, never needs to be repeated, or that those who have received it cannot forfeit it by fresh sin. But if *we* are bidden to renew our forgiveness of others until seventy times seven, can we not trust our God that He will do no less for His children?

There are many other aspects of the doctrine of Justification which, for lack of time, I have not attempted to touch upon this morning. I have not dealt with the place of repentance in preparation for forgiveness, nor with the significance of the words "in Christ," which define the special character of "a justifying faith."

But I trust that our thoughts this morning may help us to realise that Justification by Faith, if translated into modern terms, is something which vitally concerns the life of every Christian. If we would live at our best, and give of our best to our fellow-men and to God, let us begin, even here and now, by accepting from God with entire trust-

fulness, the full and free forgiveness for all our past sins, which He is ever offering to us through His Son. Then, freed from the burden of anxiety and foreboding, yet spurred to new activity by the consciousness of past ingratitude to God, let us go forth to live at our best for God, because God has given of His best to us.

And you, my brothers, who are to be called to the ministry of the Church, see that you are able to preach, out of your own experience, the gospel of forgiveness through trust. Believe me, it will make all the difference to your ministry whether you have a clear message on this point or no. When you are called to the bedside of a dying man, who perhaps has wasted all his past life, it will make all the difference whether you believe in Justification by Works or by Faith. If it is by works, I know not what you can say; for it is but mockery to tell a soul at the end of its earthly career that it must earn forgiveness by good works. How are they to be performed in the little while that remains? But if forgiveness is freely offered to every one that trusteth, then no crisis can be too urgent for the act of faith, and no time too short for the Divine response that redeems from the sense of sin. Yes! Justification by Works may be a reasonable enough doctrine for the summer-time of life, when the faculties of mind and body are strong, and future opportunities seem to stretch far ahead; but in the dark days of depression or crisis, when we are burdened with our sins, and powerless to undertake fresh efforts, there is only one message that can give us patience to endure through suffering, or courage to rouse ourselves to

new service ; and that is the old Gospel-message :
“ Fear not ; only believe ; thy sins are forgiven
thee ! ” Then, indeed, the response is glad, and
the day becomes a birthday of new spiritual life.

“ Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me ;
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.

“ Just as I am, of that free love
The length, breadth, depth, and height to prove,
Here for a season, then above,
O Lamb of God, I come.”

IV.

THE UNCOMPROMISING CHRIST.

June 15th, 1913.

I KINGS XII. 28.

"The king said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem : behold thy gods, O Israel."

ST. LUKE XIV. 27.

"Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

"It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem ! " How considerate was King Jeroboam ! So considerate, that he sought to save his subjects all needless trouble in the performance of their religious duties. It was too much to ask them to undertake the long journey up to Jerusalem ; so he brought religion to their very doors, and made the calves of gold, one in the north, and one in the south, so that no one need have far to go in order to worship. May we not feel sure that it was hailed by many of the Jews—and especially by the Jewish ladies—as the act of a gracious and kindly monarch, whose first thought was the welfare of his people ? Yet—the name of King

Jeroboam has come down to posterity branded with an epithet of shame—"Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin."

Let us turn to our second text:—"Whoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." The words have almost a forbidding sound, as though they were "warning off" any who might be thinking of following him who spoke thus. And they seem yet more harsh if we notice the preceding verse:—"If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Surely we might expect that one who could so speak would have but little attractive-power over the sons of men. Yet, in fact, He has drawn men to Himself as no other has drawn them; He has become the ruler but the lowest estimate the greatest hero of the human race.

Why is it that Jeroboam the consolidate failed so hopelessly to awaken enthusiasm, while the even Prophet of Nazareth still claims and obtains a world-wide homage?

Surely the answer is this: Jeroboam tried to make religion easy. Jesus of Nazareth made it very hard. Now a religion which is easy-going may please the sluggard or the weakling, but it will never rouse enthusiasm in the hearts of strong men whose loyalty is worth having, while a religion which sets up a standard hard to attain has done out all that is best in the best type of men, and makes them strenuous and keen.

Is it not so in other walks of life? Are not the greatest soldiers those who have often asked for

work from these men, who have appealed to their pluck and endurance, and to have aroused their loyalty and devotion?

So it is with all true leaders: he who expects little and asks for little will arouse but little enthusiasm; he who puts men on their honour, and makes them feel that much is expected of them, will evoke a response that is often surprising in its vigour. It is just because Jesus of Nazareth was so uncompromising, just because He set up so high an ideal—the ideal of daily bearing the cross of self-sacrifice—that the hearts of us men have been touched as never before or since, and we cry: He alone is worthy to be the Master of my life; He alone must be my Lord and my God!

Today, the Church is lost to face with a world that is largely indifferent to the Gospel, and is becoming more indifferent. It is true that the collapse of a nation cannot wholly be measured by its church-going; but still church-going is one of the signs of national religion; and the steady decline of church-going in recent years* is a call to all Christians to reconsider carefully our position and our methods of attack. For the national religion in England is being ground; and unless a new enthusiasm can be aroused, it is hard to see where the decline is going to end.

Some would meet the decline by making religion as easy as possible: "light services," short services, pastoral entertainment, social evenings—by such means the Church is to combat the

* Illustrated, for instance, by the Liverpool Church-going Census of 1903, published in the daily papers.

world in its offer of a good time on earth—to say nothing of heaven.*

It is all most excellent in its way—excellent to encourage harmless pleasures, excellent to draw men to the church by any and every means, in order that there they may come under good influences. And yet—do we not sometimes find ourselves asking, Is this all? Did our Lord intend His Church to be simply a Society for the Promotion of Kindliness, or for providing opportunities for listening to good music or polished orations read from the pulpit?

Is there not a stronger and sterner note needed—a note that rings clear through the Gospels—“Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple”? May not the failure of the Church to-day be due in part to this very fact—that the Church has tried to make religion too easy? She has not asked *enough* from her members; she has not put forward boldly enough the call to sacrifice and service. Too often she has smiled indulgently on indifference and apathy: “It is *too much* for you to attempt heroic things; be respectable, and be content. . . .” And the world has taken her at her word, and has agreed: “It is, *much* too much.” But men of courage and high ideals have said: “This easy-going religion is no gospel for me; I can live up to a higher standard if I keep aloof from the Church.”

Brothers, you and I have to go forth and speak

* Of the “short bright service,” it has been well said: “In too many cases, it has only succeeded in being short and bright, not in being also a serious religious service.” (Streeter, in “Concerning Prayer,” p. 266.)

to our day and generation in the name of Christ and Christ's religion. What message shall we give? Is it to be only a message of the *pleasantness* of religion, its advantages and its blessings? Or are we going to sound the bolder note, and tell men that we do not want—that our Master does not want—any followers except those who are willing to take up the cross daily? Are we ready to show by our own examples that we ourselves are not going to collapse before every difficulty and trouble, crying, It is too much for me! but are ready to face great problems, at cost to ourselves, and to fight through, for Christ's sake and the Gospel's? But let us turn from general considerations to think of our own duty in face of some of the great problems which confront the Church to-day.

Take, first, *the Problem of Foreign Missions*. I believe it is true to say that never has the urgency of the Missionary Call been more intensely realised than it is to-day by a large part of the younger generation of keen Christians. It is perhaps true that the call does not come to us in quite the same *terms* as it came to an earlier generation. When men unquestionably believed that all the heathen were, without doubt, perishing everlastingly, and that their souls were every day passing by thousands from this life into eternal fire, they had a powerful motive for missionary work. Most of us, I take it, feel that such a thought needs considerable modification; and, from that very cause, one urgent inducement to missionary work might be expected to be less powerful in our day. But there are other motives to missionary work which

are being felt more keenly to-day than ever before. The missionary appeal comes to us as a challenge to our honour, as Churchmen of this twentieth century. The nineteenth century was *great* in the history of Missions—great with deeds of heroism; great with the lives of martyrs given up for the cause. Is the twentieth century going to be an anti-climax? Shall it be told to the generations to come that where our forefathers planted and watered, we let the briars and thorns of indifference and unbelief grow rank? Are we going to let the Moslem push back our outposts in Africa, or stand idle while a Hindu Revival undoes the work of a century's Christian Missions in India? Such possibilities—and they are not remote—sting us to action if we would not be actually false to our great inheritance in Christ.

And, most of all, we feel *the urgency of the present opportunity*. We see the one chance—not of a lifetime, but of a *nation's* lifetime—slipping away, as Japan, China, India, are feeling for a new Faith, and receiving but the feeblest response from Christendom.

Some months ago a wealthy Persian, impressed by the Christian Medical Mission, offered the site for a large hospital in an important town, and to defray expenses of the building, if the staff would be provided by the Christian Church. The answer came back from the Home Church that so far from sending out reinforcements, it was probable that the number of those already working would have to be curtailed for lack of funds. Need we wonder that the offer was not renewed? The opportunity was let slip—humanly speaking, for ever.

Never, I believe, have Christian men felt the dishonour of such events more keenly than to-day; and this very fact shows that the Spirit of God is moving amongst us, bringing not peace, but a sword of unrest, and a longing for a higher ideal.

And yet—there seems no real advance; the great societies are at best only marking time, at worst meditating actual retrenchment.

Where is the secret of failure? Is it not in this—that as a Church we have not yet realised that we shall never respond to the Missionary Call unless we are ready to take up *the Cross* in grim earnest?

We must take it up *as a Church*. Unless we are prepared *as a body* to do without things we would like to have at home—funds for our parishes, ornaments for our churches, ay, and men for our clerical staffs—we have not learnt the meaning of corporate self-sacrifice. Often, even where Missions are supported by a congregation, it is taken for granted that home claims must have *first* place. But surely a congregation, as well as an individual Christian, may be called at a time such as this to look not first on its own needs, but first to the needs of others in far-off lands. Unless the Home Church is prepared to cripple herself by sending out the funds which she badly needs for England, and by sending out her very best men, in spite of—nay, *because of*—the fact that she needs such men badly here, the Decisive Hour of Foreign Missions is bound (humanly speaking) to slip away.

As with the Church, so with individual Churchmen. Are we, as individuals, prepared to “take up the Cross” in this matter? I do not mean to

suggest that every man is called to be a foreign missionary. To some—to many—the call to home-work is clear, and the way to go abroad is not open. But I do pray that no man may ever be ordained from St. Aidan's without facing the question seriously and impartially: Am I called—or *not* called—to work abroad? If we "face out" that question here, then, whether the answer be Yes or No, our influence may be strong in the Missionary Cause. But the man who is ordained without ever seriously considering the missionary call—or still more, if he has shirked a half-felt call—will not only be lost to the foreign field, but his influence at home will be half-hearted. He will probably be of the number of those who evade the subject in his own preaching, and will use the annual visit of the Deputation preacher for a "Sunday off." Remember that the parson in England, if he is keen, has unique scope for helping forward the cause of the Church abroad; but a parson who does not believe in Missions, though he may never speak a word against them, will do untold harm to the Cause.

Or, take *the Problem of Christian Unity*. Here, again, there is no mistaking the deepening conviction of Christian men that God is calling to definite action. Our forefathers were content to regard the disunion of Christendom as a regrettable but necessary evil; and, to-day, there are many who still hold that view, and who deprecate any serious efforts towards unity by telling us that "the time is not ripe."

But there is growing up a new spirit which yearns for unity with a longing that will not be

subdued, and which firmly refuses to acquiesce with placid resignation in the sin of a divided Christendom.

The *sin*—I use the word advisedly. For how can the Christian army expect to cope effectually with the forces of evil if its own forces are split up into sects, generally ignorant of each others' plans, often more suspicious of each other than of the enemy? Both abroad and at home, it is not only spoiling our effectiveness, but it affords a butt for the ridicule of the cynic, and is a scandal to the thoughtful enquirer who is otherwise drawn to the Christian Religion. If familiarity had not bred indifference, would it not strike us as a thing unutterably sad that earnest Christian men, striving for the same great principles and consecrated to the same Master, should hesitate to come together in public worship, and be wholly debarred from joining with one another in the great Sacrament of Unity?

So it is that many of the younger generation of Christians have come to feel that the ideal of Christian Unity is one which we are bound, and called by God, not only to desire, but to pray for and work for with all our might.

But the road will have to be a road of self-sacrifice. Patience and watchfulness will be needed, lest the things that really matter be surrendered. Yet there must also be readiness to give up insisting on those things which are not really vital, and yet which are often very pleasant and even dear to us—readiness to put away that party-spirit and confidence in the superiority of our own position which we dignify by the name

of "loyal Churchmanship," or "staunch Nonconformity"; readiness also to hear ourselves called "weak-kneed," "disloyal," "unprincipled." Yes, the road to unity will be a way of self-sacrifice, and none, be he Anglican or Nonconformist, Roman or Protestant, will be able to pass along it unless he be bearing the cross of humility and penitence.

It is sometimes said: This is no time to talk of unity with those who are seeking to plunder and weaken the Church! But did *Christ* sanction the principle of "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"? And methinks that when the history of Christian Reunion comes to be written (though it be not yet for many days), the place of honour will be assigned, not to that Church which stood upon her dignity, and said, "Because others hate me, I will hate them!" but rather to the Church which took the first steps towards unity, cleansing her own heart from pride and self-satisfaction, confessing her failings and showing a readiness to appreciate the good in others; above all, remembering the two great scriptural principles of Christian unity: "No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost"; and, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." May God grant that this place of honour may fall to our own Church of England! May she lead the way to Christian unity under the banner of the Cross, the symbol of self-forgetfulness and self-sacrifice!

May I add this in conclusion. It is much easier to preach about the duty of taking up the Cross than to practise it. But if men find from experience that we show a lack of consideration towards

others in our private life, that we make our plans without any thought of what others would like us to do ; or if we show ourselves irritable and selfish in the home-circle ; then, however loudly we may in days to come proclaim the duty of taking up the Cross, our friends, and our congregations, will follow our example rather than our advice.

My brothers, the Church is needing to-day clergy who will preach a high ideal, and sound a bold call to service and sacrifice. If we would take our share in this great work, let us pray and strive to set such an example in our daily lives that men may know that we believe in the truth of our College motto : *Via Crucis Via Lucis*—"The Way of Self-sacrifice is the Way of Real Happiness."

V.

BROADMINDEDNESS AND KEENNESS.

November 2nd, 1913.

COLOSSIANS I. 10, 11.

"Increasing in the knowledge of God ; strengthened with all might."

MOST of us in the present day like to be thought "broadminded"; and most of us also like to be thought "keen." For keenness and broadmindedness both stand high in the modern man's list of virtues; and few would care to think that their own character is lacking in either of these two qualities.

Yet there have been times when keenness and broadmindedness would not have been classed among the virtues at all, but rather among the vices and crimes of human nature. It was no virtue to be "broadminded" in the sixteenth century; men—and *good* men—of all schools of thought agreed that it was rather a sin, to be punished with the utmost rigour. The methods of punishment varied; sometimes it was the rack of the Inquisition; sometimes the sharp discipline of a Calvinistic presbytery; sometimes the Acts of a theologically-minded Parliament; but all

alike in their purpose to produce *uniformity* of thought and conduct—all alike in their opposition to the ideal of “broadmindedness.” Even the Puritan Movement in its early days (though in time it gave birth to the demand for religious liberty) displayed, at least in part, the universal hatred of broadmindedness ; for in the times of the Commonwealth we find Cromwell’s large-hearted plea for a wide toleration met by another Puritan stalwart with the cry : “Toleration ? Toleration is the devil’s masterpiece ! ”

But if broadmindedness has been thus accounted a vice, so also has keenness ; and that by men of high Christian character and principles. Bishop Butler is accounted a great Defender of the Faith ; but Butler regarded all keenness as the sign of an ill-balanced mind. And when Bishop Hurd was called upon to preach the Assize sermon at Worcester in 1752, he chose for his theme, “The Mischief of Enthusiasm, and the Exorbitance of Ungoverned Piety.”* Clearly, keenness was as offensive in the eyes of these good prelates as broadmindedness was in the eyes of their predecessors a century or two before.

Can we explain this contrast between these ancient and modern estimates of keenness and broadmindedness ? Few of us, I think, would care to renounce our own belief that both of these are good and excellent things ; and yet it seems arrogant to suggest that we alone of all the generations have had the wisdom to perceive this, or that all others have been in the wrong.

* Overton and Relton, “The Church in the Eighteenth Century,” page 170.

But perhaps the explanation may be found in this: that keenness and broadmindedness do not seem readily to dwell together in one character. Very frequently it happens that the broadminded man is not particularly keen, and the keen man not particularly broadminded. And so it comes about that an age of strong convictions (such as the Reformation period) tends to regard broadmindedness as little less than disloyalty to the cause of truth; while men (such as the Latitudinarian divines) with a broad, detached, academical outlook on life, resent all enthusiasm as something narrow and bigoted. In other words, the dislike of the one virtue is prompted by the keen appreciation of the other; because the two seem to be mutually exclusive.

Now it seems to me that this problem of reconciling and blending together keenness and broadmindedness is one which claims the careful thought of us all.

It is a problem full of difficulty. If we have strong and clear-cut convictions, it is intensely difficult for us to understand or appreciate other people's point of view. On the other hand, if we set ourselves to cultivate "the open mind" and the "detached" point of view, it is very hard to feel a real enthusiasm for anything in particular. But the very difficulty itself brings home to us the danger of yielding to it. For, just because it is so difficult to keep the double ideal ever before us, to cultivate both the single-heartedness of men of power and also the open-mindedness of men of love—for this very reason, many men resign themselves to a one-sided life; and in a one-sided

clerical life we see the need for the neglected virtue. How often we find a parish priest, gifted with strong enthusiasm and absolute self-devotion to his Lord, failing to win the affection of his people, simply because he cannot enter into their point of view. He has a zeal for God, but not according unto knowledge. Or, worse still, we see one whose keenness for a cause has so blinded his spiritual vision that he fails to recognise the good in other men's point of view; he indulges in misrepresentation and slander, and that without meaning it (which is the saddest part of it all), because his unbalanced keenness has blinded his eyes so that he can see no beauty in the saintliest character, unless it comes to him guaranteed by the hall-mark of his own sect or party.

Yes; we clergy especially need to pray for deliverance from the narrowness of keenness; but we need also to pray for deliverance from the impotence of broadmindedness. For if the single heart without the open mind may do *harm* in the parish, the open mind without the single heart will certainly do *no good*. If we really think that all religions are about equally good, that sin is only undeveloped good, that we shall all reach heaven somehow and somewhen—we may be quite harmless and amiable individuals, but we shall certainly not be fitted to be ambassadors for Him who said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," and who, though He be our Elder Brother, yet claims a sovereignty that brooks no rival.

So the painful spectacle of a one-sided life helps us to realise the need for blending together keenness and broadmindedness—"the single heart and

the open mind." Does not the message of yesterday—All Saints' Day—teach us the same lesson? As our thought runs back over the generations that are past, we see (it is true) many great and good men whose characters were in a measure one-sided; some predominantly strong, and owing their strength to concentration on a single ideal—Augustine and Luther, Newman and Spurgeon; others pre-eminently broad, and lovable because of their breadth—Origen or Richard Baxter, Brooke Foss Westcott or F. D. Maurice; but in such men the divorce between keenness and broadmindedness was never complete—or they would not be numbered among the saints of God. And the more complete the blending of breadth and strength in one character, the closer is the likeness to Him who is the Pattern of all the Saints, even the great Head of the Church.

Now, are there any principles that will help us in our own lives to blend together keenness and broadmindedness in the right proportions and in true harmony?

First I would say, Let us be quite clear as to the real distinctiveness of Christ's teaching, and the main lines of cleavage which separate between Christian and non-Christian principles. If we can be sure as to these lines of cleavage, they will mark out the limits of Christian broadmindedness, and they will indicate the points where Christian keenness is needed both for attack and defence.

I think we shall find that it is not so easy as we might expect to see where (if anywhere) these lines of cleavage are to be found. Party lines of division are to be seen on all sides; but do they

generally correspond to any clear line of teaching laid down in the New Testament? One almost shrinks to-day from such phrases as "definite teaching," "strict adherence to such and such principles"—not (God knows) because there is any virtue in indefiniteness or laxity, but because the definiteness is concerned with such trivial points, and the strictness is so petty in its scope. When we find Christian people bickering over the colour of a stole or the number of candles on an altar, talking as if the hour of Holy Communion or the posture of the minister were great "matters of principle"—what must the great God of Heaven think of it all?

Yet it would be a grave mistake to rush to the other extreme, and to assume that there is no distinctiveness, nothing definite, in Christ's teaching; that it is simply a vague message: "Be good!"

If there had been no line of deep cleavage between Christ's teaching and the average standard of the world, why was He crucified as a criminal? Surely the fact of the Cross is a constant reminder that Christ our Lord was exceedingly definite in His teaching, and that the lines of cleavage between Him and the world were so sharp that they led to the tragic cataclysm of Calvary. A careful study of the New Testament will show us, I think, the main points upon which our Lord's keenness was concentrated, and where He set clear limits to the breadth of His sympathies. I doubt if we shall find that they coincide altogether with the features of modern Christianity in any of its forms.

Take, for instance, that broad yet intense

sympathy of Christ with all ranks of men, which Seeley (in "Ecce Homo") called "the Enthusiasm of Humanity." Remember how He described the Samaritan as "neighbour" (Jews and Samaritans loved each other in those days as little as Ulstermen and Nationalists in modern Ireland !); and how He joined in friendship with hireling tax-gatherers and low-class people. Is this "Enthusiasm of Humanity" a distinctive feature of His followers to-day? Does freedom from class-prejudice or national bias mark a line of cleavage between Christians and non-Christians?

Or think of the repeated emphasis which Christ laid upon the supremacy of spiritual and moral duties, compared with external or formal acts. Do we keep that line of cleavage clear in our minds? Do we recognise that, just because we are Christians, an outburst of temper or a selfish act is a graver sin than even absence from public worship or forgetfulness of a Church festival?

Or think of the message of the Cross, telling of the Love of God and the almightiness of self-sacrifice. Is there not here a line of cleavage between Christian and non-Christian ideals which is often obscured? Have we never heard a "strict church-goer" say, "Oh, well, business is business!" which, being interpreted, means: "Self-sacrifice may sound very well in church, but selfishness is the only practical maxim for every-day life." And have we felt—or have we *not* felt?—that such a saying shows that the speaker is really on the non-Christian side of a great *line of cleavage* between Christ and the world—a line of cleavage scarcely visible at all in modern life?

I have spoken of these lines of cleavage because I believe that Arnold of Rugby was right when he said that one great need of modern times is to realise the difference between Christian standards and the standards of the world, and to pay less attention to the differences between different *kinds* of Christians. If once we go back to the New Testament and study the broad principles which our Lord laid down there as the distinctive marks of His teaching, we shall, I believe, begin to see our way towards blending broadmindedness and keenness into a truly Christ-like character within our own individual life; and in the world we shall be helping to draw together all men and women who truly have "the mind of Christ," and who care for the things which seemed to Him most vital.

So we come back, in closing, to a simple lesson: *Remember Jesus Christ, and what He taught.* It is a lesson which there is often need to learn—and not least in a Theological College. For a study of theology does not necessarily lead to a knowledge of Christ. But if in our college-life we keep sacred our times for Bible-reading and private prayer, the Christ of the New Testament will be real to us; and He will show us the things that matter most, when judged by His standard. Then, as we increase in breadth of knowledge, we shall be strengthened also with His might and with enthusiasm for His cause, and He will make us to be men of power as well as men of wisdom and of love.

VI.

THE CALL TO SERVICE AND THE CLAIMS OF CHRIST.

January 25th, 1914.

ACTS XXVII. 23.

“ God, whose I am, and whom I serve.”

OUT in the Mediterranean Sea, a trading-ship of Alexandria is being driven along by a fierce gale, battered and bruised, and staggering blindly in the heavy seas. There is a little group of men on board—mostly soldiers and sailors—huddled together for shelter ; for they are tired out, and have lost heart ; they can do no more, and now they are waiting—for death. But, see ! one of the group is speaking, and he is a man of a different type to the rest ; and there is a strange confidence in his manner and tone. Much of what he says is no doubt lost in the din of wind and wave ; but at least they can tell that he is encouraging them with hopes of safety ; yes, and they catch these words : “ God, whose I am, and whom I serve.”

“ Whom I serve ”—was not that indeed a motto of the life of him who was speaking—that strong, lone figure whose memory we bless to-

day ?* Was not his life, above all, a life of service ? You remember the record he himself has left us (in the eleventh chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians) of dangers and hardships and sufferings, endured for the sake of those Churches whose welfare he had so much at heart. Yet, humanly speaking, there was no *need* for St. Paul to lead so strenuous and self-denying a life. He was not driven by poverty, or by any other force of circumstances, to earn his own living. That very night, instead of being out in the storm, he might have been sitting comfortably by his family hearth, like any other respectable Roman citizen. From the world's point of view, it was his own fault that his lot was so rough ; it simply was because he had chosen to take up with this new-fangled Christian sect.

Now, why had Paul chosen this ? Because he believed that in that way he could best *serve* God and his fellow-men. That was why he wore himself out with constant travelling ; that was why he was out on the Mediterranean that wild autumn night, on his way to stand as a prisoner before Cæsar's judgment-seat.

Brothers, in the very forefront of life to-day stands the *call to service*. " Your country has need of you ; your fellow-men have need of you ; your God has need of you—you men and women of to-day—to give the best you can in service for others." This call to service lies at the heart of almost all the great movements of our time ; it is gripping the best elements in the younger generation with the conviction that it comes from God ;

* January 25th—Conversion of St. Paul.

it is what the Spirit saith unto the Churches of the twentieth century. There was a time—not so long ago—when service was accounted a sign of baseness, and a life of leisured ease was the most honourable. If I mistake not, those estimates are to-day—at least in Christian circles—reversed. It is the leisured man who (if he is a Christian) feels uneasy, and almost ashamed of his supposed privileges. The “call of the world” rings in our ears, and tells us we ought to be up and at work in the world. Sights that we have seen will not leave our memory—that haggard face that we passed in the street—those endless rows of roofs and alleys that we watched from the railway-train as we passed through Bethnal Green or Salford—they haunt us, and tell us that we, as Christian men, are needed—needed by the great world of which we are a part. And so we feel we *must* go forth to serve. If God has given us any special privileges or advantages, they are not trophies to be set on a pedestal for other men to admire; they are a trust, to be taken out into the rough-and-tumble of life, and there used—perhaps used up—in service.

Some of you may have read some of the speeches delivered last November* by many leading men—such as the two Archbishops, the Prime Minister, Sir Oliver Lodge, and others—at the inaugural meetings of the Cavendish Association for Social Service. Those speeches reflected in a remarkable way the modern spirit of service. “People talk of their rights,” said Lord Salisbury, speaking at Liverpool on that occasion, “people talk of their privileges; but the greatest privilege of all is to

* November, 1913.

be able to say, 'I serve my fellow-countrymen!'" And Lord Selborne, speaking at Norwich on the same day, reminded his hearers that true service must include the sacrifice of *time* and *trouble* and *personal sympathy*. "No man," he said, "can buy off his duty to his neighbour merely by money payment alone." And he added, "There can be no question in this matter of cheating the Umpire ; because the Umpire is God."

Surely we may welcome words such as these as signs that a new spirit of service is indeed astir among many of our leaders to-day. And if that spirit grows and spreads, it may well prove to be a great bond of unity and strength in our national life in the days of trial that seem to be lying ahead.*

And yet, it is not really a *new* spirit. It is the same spirit which inspired Saul of Tarsus to choose a life of service rather than of cultured leisure ; the same spirit which has sent out missionaries from the Church in age after age of her history ; nay, more, it is the same Spirit which was in Him who said : " I came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister "—not to be waited upon, but to serve.

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Yet, remember, we have so far only spoken of one half of our text. Before the "whom I serve" stands the "whose I am." And it was in the latter, quite as much as in the former, that the

* Written some six months before the outbreak of the War. Subsequent events have, on the whole, justified the prediction.

true secret of St. Paul's power lay. He lived a life of service, because he believed he had been *sent* to serve by One who had authority over him, "to whom he belonged" (as Dr. Weymouth renders the "*οὗ ἐστίν*" in our text). All through the weary years with their toil and disappointment, Paul looked back to that scene which we commemorate to-day, when Christ met him outside Damascus' gate, and turned round the whole trend of his life, claiming him for new ideals and new service. From that day forward, Paul was "not his own"; *Christ* was his Master and his God, "whose I am, and whom I serve."

In a sense, no doubt, Saul of Tarsus had always recognised that God had a claim over his life. But the claim of a God who has created us and preserved us is not so compelling as the claim of a God who has given up His only Son to die for us. And that was the difference between the God who was worshipped by Saul the Jew and the God who was worshipped by Paul the Christian. There is a similar difference to-day between the God of the Unitarian and the God of the Catholic Christian. In a recent issue of the *Inquirer* magazine,* there is an article by a Unitarian, describing his visit to the ancient Parish Church of Chesterfield. And there he saw, inscribed on a reredos, the words from our Litany: "By Thine Agony and bloody Sweat; By Thy Cross and Passion: Good Lord, deliver us." This is his comment: "Have we [Unitarians], in our view of the Father, anything so deep and moving as the thought that seeks expression here? Does our God love us with this

* November, 1913.

urgency? *Is He yet quite worthy of His Son Jesus?*”

Yes; there is all the difference between even the highest non-Christian conceptions of God, and the New Testament picture of a God who so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son. And the vision that Paul saw at Damascus not only reversed his attitude to Christ, but also revealed to him a new ideal of what God is, how much God had loved him, and what God had done for him.

He was like a serving-lad, who had always done his duty to his master steadily and quietly; but one day he learns that his master, all unknown to him, had saved his life in days gone by—and that at a heavy cost. Think you not that after this his service will be tenfold more devoted than before? So St. Paul, when he learned what God had done for him, felt that God had a claim upon his life that he had never realised before, and his whole soul throbbed with an intense and passionate devotion to the God “whose he was, and whom he served.”

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Brothers, am I not right in thinking that it is the spirit of service which has led some of you to the choice of a life-work? You felt that you would like to be of some use in the world—of some use to your fellow-men and to the cause of God; and you believed that you could be of the most use in the ministry of the National Church? If so, then thank God for that motive; for the spirit of service is the Spirit of Christ.

But remember, if this desire to serve is to last, it needs to be rooted in a yet deeper motive. For our efforts to serve will be strained and tested by many a disappointment and many a rebuff. We shall find that the people we want to help do not always want to be helped ; that the ideals which inspire us so much only seem to bore other folk. Harder still—we shall meet with those who have tried some form of Christian work and have thrown it up—the lapsed Sunday School teacher, the ex-District-Visitor, spreading a chilly cynical atmosphere wherever they go. Saddest of all, we shall meet the old priest who has lost his ideals, and when we tell him of our hopes, he smiles a blasé smile and shakes his head: “ Ah, my young friend, I used to be like that myself ! . . . But you will find out one day . . . ” And he sighs, and a damp fog of hopelessness settles on our hearts, and we go away, wondering whether, after all, he is right, and we are fools.

It is at such a time that we need to have the foundations of our faith deep-laid. We have heard the “ call of the world ” ; well. We have felt that we were needed ; well. But what lies behind that feeling ? Who put it there ? Was it merely an impulse originating in ourselves ? or was it the pressure of a Hand from above laid upon our life, to turn our thoughts upwards, and to open our ears to listen to the call of God through the world ? The one thing that can steady us and strengthen our faith is the conviction that God chose us—before we chose Him, He chose us, with all our weakness and all our sin, so that our service in the ministry of the Church is part of His plan for us.

Every man who is ordained to the ministry affirms his belief that God has called him to that service ; but there are many ways in which that call may be heard and realised. Most of us, I expect, can remember the time when our highest ideal for the future was to be free to do as we liked, free from all the restraints of childhood, able to please ourselves. Has that hope come true ? Not, surely, in the way we looked for ; or we should not be preparing for that life-work which is of all others a service—a “ministry.” No ; something came across our lives and made us feel that we were “not our own” ; so that when the time came that we *could* please ourselves, we chose rather to surrender that very prize which we had so often longed to possess.

“ Our wills are ours, we know not how ;
Our wills are ours, to make them Thine.”

God has many different ways in which He claims our wills. Sometimes He meets us, as He met St. Paul, in the noontide of our life, and swings it round with a sudden conversion, so that ever after we can look back to that day as the birthday of a new life. Sometimes it is in the narrow place of scepticism or sin, where despair hems us in, and we see no chance of escape ; it is then that our eyes are opened, and we see the angel of the Lord, with his warning of judgment and yet his message of salvation. Sometimes—more often, perhaps—we know not even now when first God touched our life ; but slowly new ideals grew within us, and new visions dawned before us, so that as

we look back over the years we see clearly that the Hands of our Father were laid tenderly but firmly upon us, binding us to Himself with cords of love, and claiming us for His own. And as we realise this, the old milestones of our life became filled with new associations, for we see that they are the points where God met with us—that conversation with our friend who first made us think seriously of our future—that book which revealed to us a new ideal for a life-work—that Confirmation Day, full of vows and grace. Through each and all of these God was claiming us for His children and His servants.

Yes, and our thoughts can go back beyond the time of our own consciousness, to the font, where we were named with the Name of God, and incorporated into the Body of Christ. There, too, He claimed us; ay, and before that, for the Cross signed on our forehead points us back across the centuries to the Mount of Calvary. And as we look upon the Cross, we know that in that great drama our lives had a part (though we can but dimly understand); for it was to redeem us, among others, from the mastery of sin, and to claim us for His own service, that Christ our Lord died.

And so we feel that we are *His*. His—because He created us; His—because He has watched over us and guided our life's course; His—because He died for our sakes. Therefore we are not our own, for we are bought with a price, even the life-blood of the Son of God. Therefore we go forth to serve in this work that lies before us, with courage and confidence, in spite of all its difficulties and all its trials; for we know in whom we have believed.

And if thus we go, then our ministry will be as the service of little children to a father whom they love—a service simple, and glad, and pure; and our priesthood will mean for us the whole-hearted sacrifice of ourselves, our souls and bodies, unto God, whose we are, and whom we serve.

VII.

WHERE CHRIST IS TO BE FOUND IN MODERN LIFE.

(An Easter-tide Sermon.)

May 5th, 1914.

ST. LUKE XXIV. 5 f.

“Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spake unto you.”

It was a little band of women to whom these words were spoken—the women who had come to the grave of Jesus Christ on the first Easter Day. Their hearts were crushed and stunned by the terrible tragedy of Good Friday; they were hopeless in their sorrow, scarce able yet to realise the meaning of it all; but the old devotion to the Master was still strong within them, and they were drawn to the sepulchre to do what they could—to show their last tribute of respect to the dead body of their Lord. And this is the greeting which meets them as they come to the grave: “Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here; He is risen! Remember how He spake unto you.”

There is an implied rebuke in the words. Not,

surely, because the women had come to seek for Jesus Christ—that was all to their credit; but because they had come to seek Him in the wrong place, and in the wrong spirit. They had come in the wrong spirit—the spirit of hopelessness and despondency; and therefore they had come to the wrong place, looking for Him, the Living One, among the dead. That was their mistake—a mistake due in part to forgetfulness. If they had *remembered* how He spake unto them—how, times and again, He had foretold that He would not only suffer, but “*after three days rise again*”—then, surely, they would have begun their search for Jesus Christ in a different spirit; not with blind despondency, but with stirring hopes and great expectations. And besides forgetting Christ's promises, they had failed to realise Christ's greatness. If they had realised Who He was and what He was, they would surely have felt that such a life could not end in utter failure; that a unique climax was the only conceivable close to so unique a life. If their memory of Christ had been clearer, their ideal of Him greater, and their trust in Him stronger, they would have come to the grave looking, not for a dead corpse laid upon a rock-shelf, but for a living Christ to meet them with a message of power.

That, I take it, is the significance of the rebuke: “Why seek ye the living among the dead? Remember how He spake unto you.”

So the message of our text is just this: it tells us *where Christ is to be sought—and found*. Where *life* is—life at its best and fullest—there Christ is to be sought and found.

Is not this a much-needed lesson? Men to-day tend to make the same mistake as the women of old; they tend to form too *small* an idea of Christ; they think of Him as One who is concerned only with one aspect of life, which we call "ecclesiastical" or (in the narrower sense) "spiritual"; and if that aspect of life does not appeal to them, they conclude that religion—that Christ—has no meaning for them.

I remember hearing of a Scottish lad, brought up in the straitest sect of Puritanism, and shielded from the "profane" influences of Music and Art, till one year he went on a visit to the adjacent realm of England. And there, in one of our great Cathedrals, he heard for the first time the pealing notes of a great organ, played by a master-hand, and saw the wondrous harmony of form and colour, brought into the service and worship of God. He came back home, full of new visions; but his enthusiasm was severely rebuked and repressed. These things (he was told) were secular, godless, irreligious. So, for a time, the lad tried to banish them from his thoughts; but Art had laid her spell on him, and in time he chose Art as his profession in life. Only, because he had been taught that Art and God have naught in common, he made no effort to see God in his Art; and though he became a great artist, his work—and above all his life—lacked that hallowing touch which comes only through a realisation of the Presence "in whom we live and move and have our being." What a pathetic tragedy!

It was the old mistake of the women at the grave, over again—seeking Christ, the Living One, among

the dead—among the things devoid of interest, instead of among the living—among the things where life for us is at its best and highest.

I am not forgetting that there is a sense in which Christ is to be found where life is not at its best, but marred by failure; that where *sin* is strongest, there, often, the power of Christ's gospel is seen at its strongest as a converting and cleansing power. But there is no real contradiction between this and the message of our text. For, in the first place, where sin is, Christ comes (so to speak) as a visitor for a special purpose, to fight and conquer sin; it is not His permanent dwelling-place, where we are normally to seek for Him. And further, though sin and death are twin-brothers, yet the place where the struggle with sin takes place is not merely an abode of the dead; it is a battle-field, where the issues of life and death are fought out; and from one point of view, in the tumult and stress of the battle-field life is intensely living.

No; our text does not forbid us to seek Christ in the struggle with sin; for that is often—if not always—the very centre of life's interest. But it does warn us of the danger of thinking that Christ—or religion—is bound up with things that are dull and dead and uninteresting.

Often, no doubt, it is our own fault if they do appear uninteresting; often they are full of meaning and beauty, if we had but eyes to see it. But sometimes the best way to discover this is to turn first to that side of life which seems to us most vital, most interesting, and most urgent, and seek there for Christ and His message. Then, when we have realised that Christ has a living message for

us *there*—that religion does mean something for us in the things we count dearest—then we shall find, if we come back to the old conventional phrases, that they are full of new significance and new life.

Let me illustrate this. I remember a fellow-student of my own at Cambridge who was frankly bored by conventional religion. He had no interest in public worship; he laughed at the Creeds as "out-of-date." But one thing did interest him, and drew out all his best energies, and that was Social Reform. And as he studied and thought over the problems of Social Reform, and studied also his Bible, there dawned upon him, gradually, the conviction that all schemes of Reform are bound to fail unless they are based on the great New Testament principles: "Ye are members one of another; . . . Look not every man on his own things, but also on the things of others." So there, where his life's interest was fullest, he found Christ, and surrendered his life's ideals to Him. And the result has been that he has come back to find a helpfulness in public worship and Sacraments, and a meaning in the Creeds, which he would never have found (humanly speaking) if he had persisted in seeking the Living Christ only among the things that to him were dead.

Thus far our text bears upon the life of everyone who is seeking after Christ. But it also has a special bearing upon the life to which many of us here look forward, in the ministry of the Church. For us, I suppose, it is generally true that the central interest of life lies in some aspect of clerical work. If it were not so, it would hardly be the work for which we are best fitted. For generally

a man's work *tells* most when his keenest interests are centred in the main work of his life.

But in the life of the clergyman there are many and diverse aspects: the organisations, the steady round of visiting, the liturgical Offices of the Church, the teaching in the schools, the ministry of the Word and Sacraments. And there is a danger lest those elements which appeal to us less than the rest should become dull, and barren, and burdensome. If so, remember our text and its lessons. Ask yourself where your keenest interests really lie—what is the aspect of a parson's life that has really drawn you to look to it as the best life for you. Then, when you are sure that Christ is with you there, and bringing you joy and confidence in *that* service, look out and see how the other aspects of a clergyman's life are bound together and help each other; how the organisations and the house-to-house visiting help to bring people to worship; how Sacraments and preaching teach in different ways the same message of the Cross; how the quiet devotion of the Daily Offices builds up the spiritual life and makes the character steady to face the trials and troubles of the parish.

Then, too, remember our text as we speak to others about the Lord whom we have found for ourselves. It is a Living, Risen Christ whom we preach—a Christ in touch with every aspect of life which is pure and noble and true.

We shall have to deal with many different types of soul, and preach Christ in many aspects, if we are to make Him *real* to all. There is the man or woman whose heart is in love with Nature, throbbing in response to the charm of upland and

woodland, spell-bound by the majesty of mountain-peak or ocean-swell. They will tell us that this is their religion, and that they need no other. It is for us to show them that Nature by herself cannot permanently satisfy the heart of man, and that the true meaning of the beauty of Nature is only realised when we see in it a Sacrament of the beauty of God.

Or we shall meet the soul that is busied with home-duties, so immersed in the care of husband or wife, parents or children, that every energy seems absorbed here, and no place left for thought of God. And here we must tell of Christ, the Sanctifier of the home, and point out how the truest friendship and the most loving family ties are hallowed and uplifted when touched by His Spirit.

So one might take one after another of the various types of men with their various interests, and show how, to each, Christ may be made to mean much, if only He is preached as a Living Christ in touch with the living interests of men.

But what of those in the eventide of life, for whom this world and its interests have little attraction to offer, and even "religion" seems to have ceased to appeal with much power? How can we make Christ a living reality to *them*? Can we not try to help them to realise that our Living Master is One whose power stretches out beyond the veil; that in the great Unknown, so near to them, one Figure, and one only, stands out clear; and that is the Figure of the Risen Christ? Remember how He spake unto us: "I am the Resurrection and the Life"; and even though the sands of time are sinking, the Dawn of Heaven

waits, with its infinite possibilities in store for those who trust the Lord of Life.

As with individual souls, so with men viewed more in the mass ; we need to pray for guidance to make Christ more real and living to them by our work and preaching. Am I not right in saying that to the majority of English people to-day Christ is very far from a living Person in touch with the real life of to-day ? To them, He is one who has to do with " Church matters " ; " religion " consists in attendance at Mattins and Evensong, Mass or Prayer Meeting ; and to the majority of modern men such things are rather dull and dead. I am not contending that their estimate is right ; indeed I am sure it is *not*. But I believe we can best help them to a truer appreciation of Mattins and Evensong, Sung Eucharist, and Prayer Meeting, if we can first make them feel that Christ has a living message for the great movements of to-day which all admit to be of vital importance.

When people are inclined to contend that conventional religion in our midst is a dead, formal thing, can we not point them to the Mission Field, with its rousing story of romance and heroism in this twentieth century ? If we will only keep in touch, by constantly reading good up-to-date missionary literature, with the story of the great world-movements *of to-day*, and of what the Spirit of Christ is doing in those movements, we shall be able to tell men of facts which show Christ at work as a mighty power in this present world of ours ; and our story will come as a breath of fresh air upon this used-up conventional atmosphere of European Christendom.

So, in your ministry, keep in touch with the big movements of to-day at home and abroad, and help men to see in them the hand of Him who is the First, and the Last, and the Living One, by whom all things were made.

In conclusion, the gist of what I would say is this : Form a great ideal of what Christ is and of what He will do ; preach Him as a great Christ and a living Christ, with a message for every type of man and every great world-movement. If only we realised that He is the steersman of the world's career, would not our outlook be less timorous and mistrustful than it generally is ?

An American critic has said that all *parsons* are alike in one thing : they all keep running in the wake of the world as it moves onward, crying, " Stop, stop, stop ! " There is some truth in the charge, is there not ?

And yet, if the Easter message is true, and if the Christ we serve is the Victor over Sin and Death, holding all power in earth and heaven, may we not—*must* we not—strike a bolder and more hopeful note in our lives and preaching ; a note more worthy of those who know in whom they have believed, and who feel His Presence and see His Power round about them on either hand, the pledge of the final victory of our Cause ?

" Thy hand, O God, has guided
Thy flock from age to age ;
The wondrous tale is written,
Full clear, on every page ;
Our fathers own'd Thy goodness,
And we their deeds record ;
And both of this bear witness,
One Church, One Faith, One Lord.

“ Thy mercy will not fail us,
Nor leave Thy work undone ;
With Thy right hand to help us,
The Victory shall be won ;
And then, by men and angels,
Thy Name shall be adored,
And this shall be their anthem,
One Church, One Faith, One Lord.”

For us to-day, as for St. John in Patmos of old,
the voice of the Risen Christ rings with a trumpet-
call to renew our courage and faith :

“ Fear not ! I am the First and the Last, and the
Living One ; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive
for evermore ; and I have the Keys of Death and
of Hades.”

VIII.

SELF-DEVELOPMENT OR SELF-SACRIFICE ?

July 5th, 1914.

ST. MATTHEW V. 30.

‘ If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee ; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.’

2 TIMOTHY III. 17.

“ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

LIFE'S difficulties are for the most part of two kinds : those which arise from lack of strength, and those which arise from lack of knowledge. Lack of strength—whether of body, mind, or will—often makes life more difficult. We see the right path clearly enough, but we cannot or will not follow it ; and then comes failure and sorrow. But there are difficulties of another kind ; when we stand face to face with two alternatives and cannot be sure which is right ; sometimes both alternatives seem to be right, or sometimes both seem to be wrong. Then, again, we are in a difficulty, paralysed, and uncertain whither to turn.

Now one of the biggest difficulties of this latter

kind comes to us when we are met by the rival claims of *self-development* and *self-sacrifice*. Both of the claims are rightful in themselves ; but it is not always easy to reconcile the claims one with the other.

Let us think of a few instances. A man is choosing his life-work ; shall he go to a post where the surroundings are congenial, where his natural tastes and abilities will have full scope for development ? Or shall he respond to the call from another quarter, where the *need* for him is much greater, but where there will be much to hinder and cramp his own character ?

Or, it may be the old conflict between world-claims and home-claims. A woman, perchance, has heard the "call of the world" ; she believes that her influence would tell most in some far-off land ; there the need is greatest, and there her talents will be suited to the work. Yes ; but here, in the home-land, there is someone—mother, sister, father—who could ill spare her away. And the two God-given commands ring in her ears : "Honour thy father and thy mother," and "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." How shall she obey them both ?

Or, once more ; a man and woman may feel that their character would grow best under the circumstances of married life—that for them it would be the highest and holiest life of all ; and yet there is some special work calling them—in a slum parish, or in a remote mission-field—which only an unmarried man or woman can rightly do. Which claim ought to predominate ?

So one might take instance after instance, in

which the call to self-development clashes with the call to self-sacrifice. What is the right line in such cases for a Christian man or woman to take ?

We cannot solve the difficulty off-hand by saying that of course, for the Christian, self-sacrifice must always have the primary claim, and that self-development is only another name for selfishness. No ; self-development, at its best, is a great and good thing, in accordance with the mind of Christ. " I am come," He said, " that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." And St. Paul often describes the Christian ideal of life in terms of growth : " Till we all attain unto a perfect (or " full-grown ") man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ " ; * or, as in our text, " That the man of God may be perfect, furnished completely unto every good work."

And this text leads us to see that, even from the highest Christian motives, self-development is not to be cast aside as an unworthy ideal. For the Christian life is a life given in sacrifice to God, in order that He may use it for every good work. Now, if we fail to develop our lives and characters we are offering to God a half-developed thing ; it is like the offering of a maimed victim under the Old Dispensation. And you will remember how Malachi pours his sarcasm upon such offerings : " When ye offer the blind for sacrifice, it is no evil ! and when ye offer the lame and the sick, it is no evil ! Present it now unto thy

* Eph. iv. 13.

governor; will *he* be pleased with thee? or will he accept thy person?"* So, if we come to God with our bodies unhealthy because we have not troubled to develop them physically, or our minds dull because we have not troubled to think, and offer to Him this half-developed life as our sacrifice, are we not insulting His majesty? Surely the life we consecrate to God must be a life which we, for our part, have done our best to develop in every aspect, so that it may be a vessel fit for the Master's use, "furnished completely unto every good work." Self-development is a Christian duty.

And yet—and yet—what does it mean, that call which comes again and again from the pages of the New Testament, "Whosoever will not *take up his cross* . . . cannot be my disciple . . ."; "He that loveth his life shall lose it . . ."; "Blessed are the *poor* in spirit: for *their's* is the kingdom of heaven"? It is not self-development, but *self-sacrifice*, which is spoken of here. And what of the Cross itself—that Cross to which every Christ-hearted man looks with an instinct that goes deeper than his reason? Does the Cross speak of self-development? Nay, does not the call to self-sacrifice ring true to all that is best within us, and claim our hearts with a conviction that brooks no refusal?

What is the answer to this strange baffling problem, which thwarts us and puzzles us in some form or other at every stage of life? I doubt if we can give a complete answer; but I would suggest one or two thoughts which may clear the air a little.

* Mal. i. 8 (R.V.).

First, true self-development of the individual can only come *through* self-sacrifice. Human nature, if left to itself, can no more develop into a beautiful life than a garden left to grow rank will develop into a beautiful garden. Weeds and wheat are blended together in our lives, and if both are left free to grow, the weeds will often choke the wheat.

So it may happen that an act of self-sacrifice, which seems as though it were cramping and stunting life's rightful development, is really necessary in order to kill a tendency which would prove fatal later on, if unchecked. A man, let us say, chooses a profession where his taste for quiet study will be crushed out for lack of spare time. His life may seem the poorer for the time being ; but in years to come he may feel that the self-discipline and "grit" which he gained through that hard work have been worth more to him than the further book-learning would have been. His intellect might have developed more ; but so would his tendency to selfishness ; and the latter would, in time, have sapped the vital forces of his character. And after all, development of *character* is the most essential development of all. This does not mean that in itself the self-sacrifice is good, but that it is a necessary means (human life being what it is) to a good end. Just as the surgeon has sometimes to cut off a diseased limb, wounding and maiming the body in order that life at all costs may be preserved, so the Christian sometimes has to cut away some really valuable part of his life, because it has become so interpenetrated with sin that he cannot otherwise save his soul from utter

corruption. The self-sacrifice is not in itself good ; but it is the only hope for self-development in years to come. " It is better to enter into life maimed, rather than having one's whole body to be cast into hell."

Then there is another thought : The self-development of the individual, though good, is at best subsidiary to a greater cause—the development of the whole Church of Christ.

Herein it is that the great mysterious principle of atonement still holds good even in human life—that one man's life sometimes must be sacrificed in order that another's life may be saved. Whether it be the leader of the forlorn hope on the battle-field, who loses his life and saves a whole army ; or the scientific man who, by dangerous experiments, brings disease and suffering on himself in order that others who come after may suffer less ; or the working-mother, who stunts her life and wears out body and soul with labour, in order that the children may "have a chance"—in all these we see the awful yet wondrous law of atonement.

For awful though that law is, yet our hearts recognise that there is nothing higher, nothing nobler, than the self-sacrifice of the one for the sake of the self-development of the many. Nothing nobler ; because God Himself set us the example, and showed us that it is a Godlike thing : " Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich." And whenever we see a man who is

spoiling his own life for the sake of others' happiness, though the world may call it "folly," we Christians cannot but bow our heads in reverent admiration; for we know that such an one has heard, consciously or unconsciously, the Master's call, and has caught the Master's spirit. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Now, bearing in mind these two thoughts—first that self-sacrifice is a necessary step in the self-development of the individual, and secondly that the self-sacrifice of the individual often results in the lasting happiness of the many—can we gather any principles to guide us when we are perplexed by the rival claims of self-development and self-sacrifice?

First, in every case of difficulty, let us endeavour to judge soberly and prayerfully as to the results of our action. Let us look to the wide issues, both upon our own lives and the lives of others. Which line of action will be best in the long run? Often, I know, we shall find it hard to say; but the *endeavour* thus to judge soberly will be a safeguard against many dangers. On the one hand, it will guard us against the thoughtless selfishness which takes it for granted that every desire must be satisfied, and that we ourselves are rightly and naturally the centre of our own interests. On the other hand, it will guard us against the morbid asceticism which takes delight in suppressing every human joy, and fancies that there is something meritorious in suffering and sadness. Not so; our life is a trust given to us by God, and no man is justified in injuring or maiming that life, unless by

so doing he can help forward the permanent happiness either of himself or of others. When the day comes for us to render an account for our lives, we shall have to render account for our acts of self-sacrifice, and the motives which prompted them. For unless they had a *reason* and *purpose* behind them, they will not be acceptable in the sight of God.

Only, as we try to judge soberly, let us not forget that the natural bias of human-kind is *against* self-sacrifice. Self-development is almost always the more pleasant course; and we shall find ourselves always inclined to persuade ourselves that its claims are paramount. "I have a duty to myself"; "I shall be able to do more useful work later on if I spare myself now"; "One must not give way to fanaticism"—these are suggestions which we are all of us very ready to welcome—often much too ready.

Perhaps that is why in the New Testament the call to self-sacrifice is sounded so much more than the call to self-development. We need it much more; for we are much more inclined to forget it. We are not (most of us) in danger of forgetting "our duty to ourselves"; but the duty of self-sacrifice has sometimes to ring in our ears as a trumpet-call ere we heed it. And indeed it does ring out from the pages of the Gospels with a startling, almost terrifying insistence: "If any man *hate* not his father and mother, he *cannot* be my disciple"; "Ye cannot serve God and mammon"; "He that loveth his life shall lose it." So the call comes to many to-day—to one, to leave home and friends and go out to the mission-field;

to another, to break with old traditions and grieve those he loves best as he transfers his allegiance to that Church where Christ speaks to him plainest ; to another, to turn his back upon the path where life smiles before him, and walk in a path which is dark and stony. Yes, calls such as these are hard to answer and hard to understand, but they smite upon the soul with an insistence that demands an answer ; they bear with them the clear note of the voice of God ; and though we cannot see the underlying purpose—though, like Abraham, we set forth not fully knowing whither we go—yet go we must, for we dare not despise or ignore Him who speaks thus unto us with that perplexing and yet compelling voice : “ Take up thy cross, and follow Me ! ”

But though sometimes we follow blindly, we need never follow hopelessly ; for, *remember eternity !* Though your cross may seem to crush all your hopes and spoil your life's development right on to the grave ; yet, *remember eternity !* Beyond the grave there opens out a new life, with new possibilities, when the stunted roots of good shall bring forth good fruit, and God will take account of our true self :—

“ All I could never be,
All men ignored in me,
That was I worth to God,
Whose wheel the pitcher shaped.”

Brothers, some of you are passing this week* from one chapter of your life to another—from college life to public life. And as life's oppor-

* The last week of College Term.

tunities grow wider, so also do its difficulties grow graver. Never was there a greater need in the ministry of the Church for men fully developed in body, mind, and spirit, "completely furnished unto every good work" which claims our energies in this twentieth century; yet never has the call to self-sacrifice rung out more plainly, and never has the attractive-power of self-sacrifice been more felt by the world at large. To you, if you take life seriously, those rival claims will bring many an anxious time of doubt and difficulty. There will be times when you will have either to overwork yourself, or leave undone things which ought to be done; either to neglect a clear call, or give pain to some whom you love; either to hurt the feelings of some in your congregation, or to preach on lines which do not really express your own beliefs.

At such times, remember the lessons we have tried to gather this morning. First, do your best to judge the case soberly and prayerfully, not carelessly neglecting to develop your life as far as you rightfully can, but yet guarding against the instinctive bias of human nature towards the selfish and easy path. Secondly, listen always and at all times for the voice of God, and if you feel clear that He bids you take up the Cross and follow Him, then follow at all costs, steadily and trustfully. And, thirdly, as you follow in the Way of the Cross, remember eternity; for, though your life-work may not seem outwardly a great success—yea, even though it lead you to a Calvary of trouble and humiliation—know this, that if you have really tried to follow God's leading and to walk in Christ's

steps, your life (like His) will not be a real failure ;
for, after the grave, it will rise again, a new life,
all the stronger and purer for the testing it has
undergone :

“ A life that bears immortal fruit
In those great offices which suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.”

PART II.

WAR-TIME SERMONS.

IX.

THE CHURCH'S MESSAGE TO THE ENGLISH PEOPLE.

October 18th, 1914.

HAGGAI I, 13.

“The Lord’s message unto the people.”

IN times of great national danger the heart of a people becomes wondrously sympathetic towards the claims of religion. The strong emotions which crowd upon men at such a time—trouble and sorrow, hope and courage—tend to make them receptive and expectant, ready to listen to the message of things unseen. So it is in England to-day. It was not without reason that the *Times* recently* claimed that rarely, if ever, has the “tone” of our national life been more open to religious influence than it is at the present time.

At such a time a national Church is indeed on her trial. Is she able to give to the people that message from God to which they are so ready to listen?

* October 13th, 1914. It is at least questionable whether the same estimate would have been equally true two years later.

It is a great temptation for the Church, at a time like this, simply to identify her message with the popular sentiment of the moment, *just because* that popular "tone" has on the whole been so good. The leading articles of the Press of late have often given such admirable expression to Christian principles, that the Christian teacher is inclined simply to say "Amen," and echo the same sentiments.

Yet, if the Church at this time is really content to do no more than echo public opinion, will not men justly conclude that the Church has little claim to be looked up to as the nation's guide and teacher, and that she is by no means indispensable to the national welfare? If she has no distinctive message for the nation in the days of battle, she will have little honour from the nation in the days of peace.

But if the Church in England can boldly give to the people of England a distinctively *Christian* message at this time, interpreting the signs of the times along Christian lines, welcoming the new spirit of patriotism, and yet not fearing to criticise its weak points; bringing to the English people a clearer vision of right and wrong, a steadier courage in times of trouble, and a worthier dignity in the day of victory; then the Church will win—not for herself, but for the Christ whose message she has given—a nation's grateful loyalty, and England will become, more truly than in the days that are past, a Christian nation.

What is Christ's message through His Church to our people at this time? It seems to me that it might be described as a threefold call—

to trustfulness, to truthfulness, and to thoughtfulness.

First, a call to *trustfulness*. I think we may say that our nation as a whole is trustful—trustful in final victory, trustful in the rightfulness of the national cause. And this is all to the good. Only, unless this trustfulness has a religious background, it may degenerate into mere shallow light-heartedness, or a refusal to face the graver aspects of the situation. Therefore England needs Christ's call to a *Christian* trustfulness, which rests upon God's power and God's love. The nation is confident in its brave army and navy; well, the Christian Englishman is confident in these, too; but he is yet more confident in God behind them. He may not have the skill to interpret the military and naval situation, and claim for his own side the certainty of victory on strategic grounds alone; but in the pages of history he believes he can trace the hand of God controlling and guiding the nations.

" Though the mills of God grind slowly,
Yet they grind exceeding small;
Though He stands and waits with patience,
With exactness grinds He all."

And, if behind the big battalions stands a God of justice, then, at least, we of the Allied Peoples may feel sure of this: that a nation which has broken covenant and trampled under foot the lesser peoples in its lust for triumph, has surely lost the secret of true and lasting greatness; and we cannot doubt but that the final victory *must* rest with the cause which we believe to stand, however imperfectly, for honour and freedom and

truth. So a rightful part of the Church's message to the nation is the call to trustfulness and steady courage through the long days of waiting, because God ruleth on high.

But if the call to trustfulness is fully Christian, it will carry us a step further. The Old Testament indeed taught that God ruleth over the sons of men; but the New Testament reveals a more wonderful truth, that God suffers with the sons of men. For the Cross of Calvary is not only the pledge of God's finished work; it is also the picture of God's eternal character. He always is bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows; in all our affliction He is afflicted. He suffers with us. This, too, is a message which steadies and strengthens us in the days of trial.

Can you ever remember in time of sickness, lying in bed in the dark, half asleep and half in pain, with a horrible sense of loneliness and wretchedness, and saying to yourself: "No one cares"? But just then, perhaps we heard some slight sound, or felt the touch of a hand upon the bed; and we knew there was someone at our side who cared! And the lonesomeness passed away and was lost in the sense of another's presence and another's love.

In these days of war there are many feeling lonely and depressed. Indeed I expect there are few of us who do not sometimes feel weary and disheartened as we read the sickening record of suffering and sorrow. The world is a puzzle to us, and we are like children groping in the dark. But then there rises before us the vision of the Cross, with its picture of a suffering God—not a

God who is looking down from heaven with placid indifference upon the long-drawn agonies of Belgium or the racking anxieties of English or German mothers whose sons are at the Front. Nay :

“ Never a sigh of passion or of pity,
Never a wail for weakness or for wrong,
Has not its archive in the angels’ city,
Finds not its echo in the endless song.”

And from this knowledge that “ God cares,” there comes to us a steadying, strengthening faith, which helps us to wait and work with hope.

“ Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near ;

.
And out of darkness came the hands
That reach thro’ nature, moulding men.”

This, then, is surely Christ’s first message to the nation at this time—a call to trustfulness, based on faith in God’s righteous power and God’s fatherly sympathy. “ Be strong, and He shall comfort thine heart ; and put thou thy trust in the Lord.”

Secondly, Christ’s message includes a call to *truthfulness*. May I emphasise the need for this by a recent experience of my own ? On the day when war between England and Germany was declared, a friend said to me : “ Now that the die is cast, I think we ought not to scruple to make the most of, and even to exaggerate, our grievances against the enemy.” It was a very natural point of view, and it is a very widespread point of view.

But is it *right*, according to Christ's standard? Deliberate exaggeration is always (in plain English) deliberate lying. Is that right? Is it even a wise policy? For it is not characteristic of a brave man to pervert the true facts of a case or to misrepresent his adversary. Misrepresentation is the child of hatred and of fear. It is the coward who tries to bolster up his nervousness by noisy boasts and wild, untrue charges against his foe. A level fairmindedness is a sure sign of real courage, and a sure pledge of final victory.

I take it that we Christians all want to be fair-minded in this struggle. But we are none of us free from the strong temptation to give way to misrepresentation and unfairness of judgment against our enemies. Especially when our blood boils at the story of some fiendish outrage, we seem almost compelled to cast aside all restraint, to give free rein to hatred and malice, and to welcome every rumour which blackens the character of our foes. But it is not *right*; and, in the long run, it will not even *pay*. For it will recoil upon our own heads, by gaining us a reputation for panic-stricken credulity or impotent malice. We English value the reputation for being able to "play the game fairly"; let us show that we can do it even in time of war.

It will not always be easy. When men's passions are heated, a plea for fairmindedness towards our foes will often be denounced as a sign of weak-kneed patriotism. But Christ calls upon His Church to set an example to the nation in this matter of truthfulness and fairmindedness. Let us see to it that we, as Christians, respond to that call.

Let us never take delight in the silly rumours which (as a moment's reflection would often show us) have their foundation solely in malice and not in truth ; let us never forget that many of our foes are fellow-members with us of the Body of Christ, some of them hating, as heartily as we do, the heathen policy of militarism, of which this war is the natural fruit. It may be that some of us, through the Student Movement, have joined with them in Conference, and have knelt side by side with them in prayer. Towards these especially, our common Lord bids us, as Christians, to be fairminded, and never give way to slander or untruthful words.

Christ's third call to the nation is a call to *thoughtfulness*. We, as Christians, ought to set an example of thoughtfulness in the small matters of daily business. Under the new conditions of war-time we are very liable to act on the impulse of the moment, without stopping to think what the consequences will be. In the first shock of excitement, we did not all of us realise that the prudent desire to lay in stores of provisions while opportunity offered, might tend to raise prices to a famine-scale, and cause untold distress. We did not realise that a generous gift to a special fund, if it meant accounts unsettled and wages unpaid, might create more trouble than it relieved. In such cases the Church's duty is surely to give to the nation, by word and by the example of her members, a call to thoughtfulness, based on the great Christian principle : " Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

But, more especially, Christ's call to thoughtfulness has reference to a future which seems yet some way off. It is not too early for Christian people, even now, to be asking themselves the question: After the war—what then? For the lines of settlement will depend, not only on the diplomatists, but also on the force of public opinion—and also (let us add) on the power of prayer. Now, in both these ways the Church has a duty to perform, in helping the nation towards a Christian settlement of the war.

Have you ever asked yourselves what kind of settlement you would desire to see? Christ calls us all to think out our answer to this question. We pray daily for "a rightful and abiding peace." What will that involve? It will mean terms which shall secure (as far as possible) repayment for injury done, a protection against any repetition of wanton assault; but it will *not* mean terms which would crush and cripple for ever the welfare of a conquered people by merely vindictive penalties. On such terms a peace would not be righteous, nor would it be lasting. For, if the peace is to endure, the terms of settlement must seek, as far as possible, to avoid leaving a legacy of mutual hatred and resentment. You may remember a recent letter in the *Times*, in which the writer urged that the broken walls of Rheims Cathedral should never be repaired, but should stand for ever as a monument of Teutonic barbarism. Surely a Christian settlement will not *wish* to keep alive such memories longer than necessary. They will live too long at best, and the great sores of to-day will be many years ere they heal.

But never let us be so faithless as to maintain that they *never* can heal, or that it is useless to try to think out the lines of a Christian settlement.

There is a scene in the Scottish Highlands, which I have known from boyhood, which seems to me to be a kind of parable for these days. At the foot of the Grampian Mountains lies a little loch which was once famous for its beauty; heather and fern draped the rocks round its shores, and not a single jarring feature spoilt the harmony of the picture. But one day in August, 1898, at the end of a long drought, a great forest-fire swept down upon the banks of the loch, eating its way on and on with relentless march, and leaving behind it nought but charred wood and blackened earth. I remember visiting the scene the next day, while the ground was hot and smoking. The ferns were shrivelled and the heather was black, the loch lay like a pond with a leaden rim, and all the tender beauty of the scene was gone; it seemed impossible that it could ever be the same again.

Then, after many years, I went back, only a few weeks ago, to the old scene once more, and I found that the healing of Nature had been more complete than one could have dared to dream. Only a close scrutiny discovers traces of the great fire's work. The rocks are draped again with ferns, and the banks are deep with heather, sloping up without a break into the great purple rampart of the Grampians high above. Peace and beauty once more reign supreme.

Brothers, if God can so clothe the grass of the field, and heal the sores of Nature with the magic touch of time, shall He not much more clothe again

the nakedness of the peoples who have been stripped barren by the storms of war? Shall He not heal the sores of the nations which are so black and bleeding with the fire and sword of battle? Surely He will.

“ Though the cause of evil prosper
Yet 'tis truth alone is strong ;
Though her portion be the scaffold,
And upon the throne be wrong ;
Yet that scaffold sways the future,
And behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadows
Keeping watch above His own.”

Therefore, be strong, and of a good courage ; and go forward, as members of Christ's Church and witnesses for Him, to pass on to the nation the threefold call to trustfulness, truthfulness, and thoughtfulness. For it is indeed the Lord's message unto the people of England in this day of Battle.

X.

THE DANGERS OF REACTION IN WAR-TIME.

November 8th, 1914.

JAMES V. 17 (R.V.).

"Elijah was a man of like passions with us."

THERE are few characters in the Old Testament more intensely human than that of the prophet Elijah. He is certainly no mere "plaster-saint"; but a man with strong lights and shades in his character, swaying from one mood to another with dramatic suddenness; essentially "a man of like passions with us."

Take, for instance, the picture of Elijah which is given us in the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of the First Book of Kings. In the eighteenth chapter we have a bold picture of Elijah the hero. We see him, a grim, lone figure in the days of the famine, meeting King Ahab without flinching, and answering the charge of rebellion with a counter-charge: "I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house!" We see him on Mount Carmel, one man against a nation—alone, but

brave and unafraid, challenging the nation to a test of religious power. We see him offering to his opponents the first "innings" and every advantage in the great trial, and then waiting with grim satire as they lash themselves into a frenzy in the vain effort to call down fire from heaven.

Then we see Elijah at the climax of his triumph. Alone he repairs the broken altar of Jehovah, and watches while the bystanders drench it with water to guard against fraud. Alone he stands up in the sunset light and prays his stately prayer: "O Lord, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Lord, art God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again." And as he prays, the answering fire sweeps down upon the altar; and the victim, yes, and the very stones and dust, and the water in the trench, are all consumed. Then, indeed, a great shout goes up from the people, as they acclaim Elijah as victor in that great trial, and bow themselves in worship before Jehovah, Elijah's God.

I doubt if anywhere you will find a more striking picture of strong, unbending courage against heavy odds—of heroism fighting its way through crisis to victory.

But pass to the next chapter.* Elijah is still the central figure—the same Elijah who had stood so brave and strong on Carmel. The struggle is over, the victory won; and the hero is able to

* 1 Kings xix.

rest. But just then there comes a messenger, with the news of the Queen's displeasure—that is all. Yet Elijah, who had faced the King and met threat by threat—Elijah, who had challenged a whole nation on the mountain-top—this same Elijah, at the mere news of a woman's anger, turns and runs into the desert like a hunted hare. All his spirit is gone ; like a tired child he throws himself down under a juniper-tree and cries that he may die : “ Now, O Lord, take away my life ; for I am not better than my fathers.”

What a catastrophe ! What an anti-climax, after the splendid heroism of a few hours before ! Yet is it not very true to life ? Is not a great heroism often followed by a great reaction ? The man who in some branch of public life has kept his head and nerve steady, and steered his business through a difficult crisis, feels the reaction when he comes back to his home, and the slightest annoyance upsets his self-control. The woman who has been brave and cheerful through the long strain of tending a sick child, breaks down utterly as soon as the crisis is past. Nay, often, the more splendid the heroism, the more dangerous is the reaction.

Have we not found this so in our own experience ? We have been uplifted, it may be, by sermon or sacrament, stirred by a powerful book, or inspired by a keen friend ; and we have resolved to live at a higher level than before. And for a time it is so. Then, slowly, the force of reaction makes itself felt ; one by one the old habits grip us again, and one day we realise that we have gone back to the old level of life.

Oh, remember that the hour of reaction is an

hour fraught with the gravest danger to a human soul. For if the failure is keenly realised, it may bring depression and hopelessness ; while if it is not keenly realised, there will come an apathy and indifference to failure, which is the forerunner of eternal death.

No one stands in greater danger from reaction than one who is called to be a minister and priest of God. For by his calling he is led to higher heights of vision and enthusiasm than other men ; indeed, only by so rising can he raise his people. But all the greater, then, is the danger of reaction. After the sermon into which you have put your best powers and thoughts, or after the Sacrament where the Presence of the Lord was intense in its reality and power, there will come the days of drab monotony and weary labour, when the brain is tired and the spirit flags, and we turn our hearts away from God, as sulky children turn away from their father ; even though we know that prayer, and prayer alone, is the talisman which would break the spell that holds us.

Therefore, pray often one for another ; for at such a time it is hard for a man to pray for himself. And let us remember, for our comfort, that in the hours of depression and apathy the Spirit of God forgets not those whom He has called. Keble, who knew well the danger of reaction, has taught us this :

“ When foemen watch their tents by night,
And mists hang wide o’er moor and fell,
Spirit of counsel and of might,
Their pastoral welfare guide thou well.
And O, when worn and tired they sigh
With that more fearful war within,

When passion's storms are loud and high,
And brooding o'er remembered sin
The heart dies down—O, mightiest then,
Come ever true, come ever near,
And wake their slumbering love again,
Spirit of God's most holy fear!"

Turn for a moment to another aspect of the same thought. We have been passing of late through a time of *national heroism*. Every soul that is worthy of the English name has been stirred to enthusiasm and unselfish effort. For this, we thank God and take courage. But remember, that the time of greatest trial is not yet. Not when the first shock of battle came upon us ; not now,* when we are beginning to realise what the war will mean and cost ; not even if news of reverses and failures should strain our hope and confidence. No ; but at an even later stage, when the issues of war are decided, and the victory (please God) is won ; *then* comes the time of gravest trial for a nation. For then the glamour of war is over, and the heroic effort is relaxed ; old foes are no longer knit together by the bond of a common fear, and party-spirit is no longer overshadowed by the spectre of a common peril. Then it is that petty bickerings begin to revive ; the prospects of heavy taxation or new legislation arouse louder complaints than the deep sorrows and bereavements of war-time ; and the national unity, which stood firm through the days of trouble, is threatened and undermined by the insidious power of national reaction in times of peace.

Therefore, let us steady ourselves by prayer and

* November, 1914.

earnest resolve, lest we forget the great lessons which the war has taught us :—

“ To steel our souls against the lust of ease ;
To find our welfare in the general good ;
To hold together, merging all degrees
In one wide brotherhood.”

The war, with all its troubles, has brought us this blessing of national—nay, of Imperial—unity ; pray that we forfeit not that blessing through the sin of national reaction in the days to come.

But turn back once more to Elijah. How did God deal with his reaction ? Did He leave him there, as a hopeless failure, a man who had proved himself untrustworthy and unstable ? Nay ; God does not deal thus with His children when they stumble and fall. The story of 1 Kings xix. is full of points which illustrate God's method of saving men from the sin of reaction. Let us take two of these points : first, the appeal to Elijah's self-respect ; secondly, the new vision of God.

First, the appeal to self-respect, in the light of past heroism. “ What doest *thou here*, Elijah ? ” *Thou*, the hero of Carmel—*here*, a spiritless waif in the desert, with no work to do, and no hope in thy heart ? *Thou*, a man with such a past, fallen to such craven cowardice ? The sting of the appeal wakes memories of the past in Elijah's heart : “ Yea, I *have* been jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts ! ” But as yet the spirit of depression holds him down : “ I, even I only, am left ; and they seek my life to take it away.”

God often rouses a soul from the deathly sin of

reaction by waking memories which sting our self-respect and quicken us to action. In the day of depression or apathy, a voice rings in our ears, "What do you *here*—you, a Christian man or woman—in this desert of faithlessness and despair? Have you never felt the guiding touch of God's hand upon your life? Have you never seen the vision of a life of useful service? Are you going to show yourselves unworthy of the trust which God and your fellow-men have put in you?"

Doubly powerful are such thoughts when they come to one who has been called to the ministry. "What do *you* *here*—you, who have set your ideals so high—you, who have professed the solemn vows of Ordination—you, who have spoken in God's Name to His people, and have ministered to them the Sacraments of His Love? What do *you* *here*, in the desert of reaction and sin? Memories and thoughts such as these, with all their sting and shame, are often God's voice rousing us and saving us in the day of reaction.

If we, as a nation, begin to forget our national heroism of the last few months; if, as soon as the danger is past, we begin to fall back into the old party-spirit and bitterness and selfishness, and to narrow down our sympathies and interests to our own class or clique in Church or State—then, pray God to check us with the appeal to our national self-respect: "What do *you here*, you men and women of England? *You*, who heard and answered the call of your country—some to active service—some to death—some to unselfish effort and prayer at home—what do *you* in the desert of quarrelsomeness and low ideals? Yes, pray that the sting

of that appeal may go home to the hearts of England, so that we keep true to the high ideals of Christian patriotism which we have learnt in the discipline of war.

But God does not only turn Elijah's thoughts back upon himself and his own past ; He turns them outwards as well, and shows him a new vision of God. The call comes to the prophet : " Go, and stand upon the mount before the Lord ! " And there he finds the Lord—not in the tumult of wind or earthquake or fire ; but in the still small voice.

Partly, perhaps, it is a corrective to Elijah's love for the dramatic and the sensational, a reminder that God is to be found, not only in miracle and catastrophe, but also in the quiet normal course of life. But certainly it came to Elijah with a strength of conviction that was both new and renewing in its power ; and he went forth to fresh work, a strong man once again—strong because he had seen the Lord and had heard His voice, quiet and still, yet mighty in its strength.

For us, when we are in the throes of reaction and depression, nothing—not even the appeal to our self-respect—will avail to save us and raise us, unless God gives us in some measure a new vision of Himself. For is it not true that sometimes, when gloom sits heavy upon us, and we have lost the power, and even the desire, to rouse ourselves, there come to us, as it were from without, through no conscious effort of our own, brighter thoughts and higher ideals ? Very quietly they rise and grow in our hearts, we know not how ; there is no stir of miracle or portent about them ;

yet they are the signs of God at work in our hearts, opening our eyes to see a fresh vision of Himself, speaking to us with the still small voice. So we rise to shake off our depression and our apathy, and we go forth, like Elijah, strong and steady to take up our life-work again.

So may it be with our nation, too. We are being drawn to-day to seek Him in the tumult of wars and troubles; well. But when the troubles are past, and the national life is settling down again into the normal tenor of its way—then, may God give us a vision of Himself in quieter guise, lest we forget and fall away. Let us pray that He may show us clearly what the Cross of Christ and the Gospel of Christ mean in the normal every-day life of the nation—purity in the home; integrity in business; the cleansing away of sin and poverty and woe. If—and *only* if—we learn to see God's hand in these quieter aspects of national life, as well as in the struggle for a great cause, we shall be saved from the danger of national reaction in the days of peace.

As long as England stands face to face with God, with the Cross clearly seen and fully realised, so long will she go forward along the path of service to God and man—that service which (for a man or a nation) alone gives “perfect freedom.”

XI.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE WAR TO A DIVIDED CHRISTENDOM.

January 24th, 1915.

ST. JOHN XVII. 21-23.

“That they all may be one ; . . . that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. . . . That they may be made perfect in one ; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me.”

MANY things have happened during the past six months* which most of us would have dismissed as incredible or impossible had they been foretold in the quiet days of last summer. Among these “impossible” things which have actually happened, perhaps the most wonderful has been the sudden manifestation of *national unity*.

We found ourselves, in July, a nation rent by bitter controversies, on the very edge of civil war ; and even the wisest men amongst us seemed powerless to avert the disaster. We find ourselves, to-day, a nation one in heart and purpose, realising that in unity lies the only secret of a people's strength.

As we think of this, we thank God ; for we feel

* July, 1914—January, 1915.

that this great lesson of national unity has not been learnt by any wisdom of our own ; it has " come " to us from without ; it has surely been " sent by God."

Yet, thankful though we are, there is an aspect of the situation which may well cause those of us who are Christians to pause and think seriously.

For it is not by the *Church* that this lesson of unity has been brought home to the nation. Nay, rather, it is the nation which has set the example to the Church ; it is the nation which has led the way along the path of internal unity and fellowship.

The Church, it is true, has all along repeated, through sermon and liturgy, the traditional Christian message of love and goodwill ; but can we say that the Church's influence in national life has really been a power making for national unity ? Was organised Christianity a *peace*-making factor in the problems of Ireland or of Wales ? Was it thanks to " the Churches " that we were saved from civil war ? Were they not rather a provocative and disturbing element at the points of gravest crisis ?

Yet, surely, the secret of true Unity ought to be and *is* to be found in the Christian Faith and the Christian Gospel. For there is no bond of union so close as the bond of love ; and where is love so loving as in the words and life and Cross of Christ ?

Herein lies the peculiar poignancy of the present situation—that the Church, which claims to be Christ's messenger in carrying the gospel of love and goodwill—the Church, which ought to be the special manifestation to the world of the spirit of

love which was in her Master—seems to be so powerless as a teacher of the lesson of unity, that she herself has to be taught the lesson by the nation at large !

What is the explanation ? If we think over the problem, we shall (I believe) find ourselves driven to the conclusion that the chief source of the Church's powerlessness as a peace-making influence to-day is to be found in the *prevalence of the "war-spirit"* within the Church herself. I mean by the "war-spirit" that spirit of mutual suspicion and dislike among Christians, which has helped to break up the unity of the Body of Christ and to throw Christendom into a chaos of quarrelling sects. Is it not a commonplace saying that no controversies are so bitter as "religious" controversies, and no difficulties so insuperable as "religious" difficulties ?

The following words, written by the Arch-deacon of Worcester, are severe, but not (I think) far from the truth :*

"Very much in the tone of religious controversy is distasteful to the moral sense of many a man of the world. . . . Trained in the chivalry of sport, he is accustomed to give the other side every chance ; . . . to yield, not to claim, the benefit of the doubt. . . . To a man so trained, the acrimony of religious controversy, its reckless imputation of motive, its whining in defeat, its exultation in victory—these things seem to him to be 'low down' and very 'poor form.'"

Is it not true ? And if true, does it not explain, in part, why so many *good* men in our land stand

* Greig, "Church and Nonconformity," p. 45 f.

aloof from organised Christianity? To such men, God's call through the *nation* in these last few months has been strong and compelling, and they have felt bound to answer, or at least to give a reason if they could not respond. Yet God's call to them through the *Church* has been sounding for ages past, the call to slum-parish or distant mission-field; but they never heeded it—never even felt bound to explain why they were heedless.

God's call through the nation has proved a mightier power than God's call through the Church. And why? Because a *disunited* Christendom, full of the war-spirit, has been unable to speak with convincing power in the Name of the God of Love.

It was not without deep significance that our Lord in His great prayer of St. John xvii. twice linked the two petitions: "That they may be one; . . . that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. . . . That they may be made perfect in one; that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me." The two are linked by a divine bond, which may not be broken. So long as we, Christ's disciples, are *not* one, we have no right to expect that the world will believe in the Master whom we preach. Only a united Church can claim and manifest the spiritual power which will convince the world.

Need I say more to urge the necessity of facing the problem of Christian Unity at this time? It is a duty which rests in a measure on all Christian men and women, and especially on those who are to hold any office or administration in the Church of the future.

There are, it is true, some types of people who

do not seem to feel that there is any difficulty in solving the problem.

There is, for instance, the person who believes that he, or she, or the Church to which they belong, is in possession of the whole of God's revealed truth; and that in so far as other persons or Churches differ from them, they differ simply by reason of heresies or superstitions. In that case, of course, the solution of the problem is quite simple. All other Churches must submit and conform to the one perfect system which already exists; and Christian Unity will at once be an accomplished fact.

I pass over the practical difficulties involved in such a scheme. The only conceivable outcome is that Christendom would continue to consist of a number of Churches each waiting indefinitely for the others to offer their submission; and that is not, I think, a very hopeful situation.

But besides this, the whole idea seems to many of us fundamentally mistaken. God's truth is surely greater and wider than the system and formularies of any one Church. Even if all the Churches of Christendom could be persuaded to submit and conform to some one of the existing Church-systems—whether that system be Roman Catholicism or Congregationalism, Anglicanism or Quakerism, or any other—the result would be an inadequate, one-sided type of Christianity. The Church so formed might have regained its *Unity*, but only at the expense of forfeiting the hope of a true *Catholicity* in days to come.

There is another type of person who has little difficulty in solving the Problem of Christian

Unity. He assures us that our differences are really unimportant; that if we will but concentrate on the great truths which we all hold in common, we shall soon find that we really are one. In other words, he advocates the policy of "Undenominationalism."

Now Undenominationalism has suffered much from fierce denunciations; but it has at least taught us two valuable lessons: first, the distinction between essentials and non-essentials; and secondly, the possibility of co-operation in practice, in spite of our differences in theory. I need only mention the British and Foreign Bible Society to show how fruitful and beneficent the Undenominational method has been in actual working. It has played a great part in the preparation for Christian Unity.

Yet I cannot believe that Undenominationalism will ever prove to be a permanent or complete solution of the Problem of Unity. For one thing, the differences which separate the various types of Christians are not always slight or unimportant. The controversy between Sacramentalist and non-Sacramentalist (to take but one instance) cuts very deep; in the last resort, it can be traced to two different conceptions of God and of His methods of dealing with men. I do not say that the two conceptions cannot be reconciled; but I do believe that a true unity is not to be reached merely by shirking our difficulties or refusing to think about them; but only by thinking them out to the best of our powers with care and with prayer.

Under a scheme of Undenominational unity we should have men, or Churches, agreeing on certain

great truths, but holding widely different beliefs on many others, yet continually *suppressing* these latter beliefs for fear of breaking the unity. Surely this would be a state of very unstable equilibrium ; a very precarious foundation on which to build a great united Church. Let us be careful, lest in our zeal for Unity we try to heal lightly the hurt of God's people, crying " Peace," when there is no peace.

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But is there no other and better path towards the Unity of Christendom ? I believe that there is, though it may be a slower and more painful road ; and I would suggest that its keynote is to be found in the phrase " mutual contribution." The beliefs in which we differ are not to be merely surrendered or suppressed, but to be held as a trust from God, and (when the time is ripe) brought as a contribution towards the building-up of a wider truth.

For surely the history of Christianity shows that the responsibility for our present divided state of Christendom does not rest merely with the minorities who have separated themselves from the main body. Quarrelsomeness and perversity there has often been on their side, no doubt ; but surely on the other side there has often been a refusal to recognise some principle of doctrine or practice which *needed* to be emphasised. If so, may we not regard the separated bodies, in spite of their frequent errors and one-sidedness, as *trustees* of some fragment of the truth, sent by God to be a

standing rebuke to the rest of the Church for her forgetfulness of the same? If so, the only right conditions of Reunion are conditions which will enable each Church to *bring with it* into the Unity of the whole Body that special aspect of truth for the sake of which it broke away.

Time would fail me were I to try and speak of the special contribution which the various types of Christianity may make towards the building-up of the Church in days to come.

But I would like to quote some words of a recent Anglican writer,* which seem to me to express exactly what I am trying to say :

"The position of the Church of Christ at the present day may be set forth in a parable. It is as if a party of children had found in some corner of a garden, all scattered and stained, the fragments of a china bowl. And each of the children has carried off for himself a different fragment. One of them, a member of the Society of Friends, as it might be, has carried away quite a small piece, but showing a section of the pattern, wonderfully beautiful and seemingly almost complete. . . . And others, Anglicans or Presbyterians, as it might be, have carried away larger pieces, showing a more complete portion of the pattern. And they are sure that though these are only fragments, they contain the key to the whole design. And there is one—he is the Roman Catholic—who, because his piece is large, and the pattern which it shows is so rich . . . thinks it is the *whole* bowl.

"But after a time the children begin to compare their pieces. . . . Then they carefully cleanse off

* Streeter, "Restatement and Reunion," pp. 86 ff.

the stains ; . . . they collect the fragments and piece them together, never forcing them by breaking off bits when they don't seem to fit immediately. . . . So gradually the whole bowl is joined together again. And then the original pattern, with all its richness of beauty and detail, will stand out whole and distinct ; and the bowl can be filled with water—the Water of Life—and the nations will drink thereof.”

Is all this merely a beautiful but unattainable ideal ? For answer, I would point to the only movement (so far as I know) which has consistently taken the watchword of “ mutual contribution ” to guide its efforts for unity. I mean the series of conferences in preparation for the World Conference on Faith and Order. I cannot now enter into details, but assuredly the story of those conferences during the last two or three years afford a marvellous illustration of the great promise : “ According to your faith be it unto you.”* Again and again, a step towards unity which seemed too good to be true has actually been carried out along these lines.

But what can we do in the way of practical help in this matter ? My brothers, if there is one body of men who can do more than any other at this time to help, or hinder, the cause of Christian Unity, that body is the younger generation of Anglican clergy. You will have unique opportunities to set

* In 1913-1914, the Anglican Church in America undertook the expenses of the mission of the Free Church Delegates from the Movement in America to the English Free Churches. Such an act of fraternal sympathy seems almost incredible to us who are accustomed to the controversial atmosphere of English religion.

an example, and to make public opinion in the English Church to feel the urgency of God's call to Unity. And there is no work more immediately vital in this matter than the arousing of Christian public opinion.

May I close with three practical suggestions concerning our own conduct as Christians, and especially as clergy.

First, can we not set our faces against the un-Christian *party-spirit* which is so prevalent both within each Church and between the Churches? It will not be easy. It will mean the loss of many a good controversial point, which is so telling just *because* it is so one-sided; it will mean the disuse of these pungent terms which we apply to our opponents—terms which we use just because they are contemptuous and provocative. It will mean a greater readiness to recognise the weak points of our own party or our own Church, and the strong points of others—especially those towards whom we are not naturally drawn by taste or sympathy. That will not be easy; but it will be worth while.

Secondly, shall we not be ready to take the *initiative* in all opportunities for friendship and practical co-operation? So often we hold back, and excuse ourselves by recalling old injuries, real or imagined, and leave it to the other side to make the first move. Nay; the true peacemaker after a quarrel is the man who is first to hold out the right hand of fellowship.

Lastly, let us remember that the true bond of Christian Unity is Love—love to one another and love to our common Lord. The deeper our own spiritual life, the closer shall we be drawn to all

who share the same life ; for we shall feel that we and they are already one in Christ.

“ We faintly hear, we dimly see,
In differing phrase we pray.
But dim or clear, we own in Thee,
The Life, the Truth, the Way.”

So let us work and pray for the unity of the Church of Christ ; for a Church whose faith shall be full and deep, built up by contributions from many a source ; a Church one in Spirit, and one in her witness to the world ; a Church in which there shall be neither East nor West, Roman nor Protestant, Anglican nor Free Churchman ; but all shall be *one in Christ Jesus*.

XII.

THE REDEMPTION OF THE WORLD BY THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

February 28th, 1915.

ROMANS V. 10.

"If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

SOMEONE has spoken of 1914 as "the year of the Great Disappointment." Certainly there are few for whom the War has not brought disappointment in some form or other. Plans have been upset; the family circle has been broken by the call to arms; the flourishing business has been thrown into confusion by the financial unsettlement; and many a pleasant prospect has been overshadowed by the storm of war.

Besides these personal disappointments, there is the vague but very real pain which has come to all those who held high hopes and ideals for the near future. The social reformer, the missionary enthusiast, have alike seen their plans for advance swept away in the great catastrophe; and even when the storm is past, it will (in most cases) be much harder than before to carry them into effect.

To all keen, hopeful souls, these things have come as a great disappointment.

But they have also come as a *challenge* to new thought and action. For God often speaks to us through disappointment, forcing us in this way to admit that "*something is wrong*," and urging us to seek for the remedy. So, to-day, our disappointment forces us to admit that something has gone wrong with the world, and in our perplexity we seek for the true lines of recovery. Where shall we find them?

The answer is, in the New Testament. For there we find that the true lines of recovery after a fall always start from the Cross of Calvary. And in our text there are two phrases which seem to me to give the secret of recovery after failure and disappointment: "Reconciled by the death of God's Son"; "Saved by His life."

Of the first phrase, "Reconciled by His death," I do not wish to speak at any length to-day. Only let us remember that reconciliation, in some form or other, is generally the first step towards recovery after a failure. Without reconciliation it is little or no use to try and rise again from our mistakes; for our efforts will be thwarted by dogged opposition, and our courage depressed by the sense of unforgiven wrong.

And if behind the world's failures stands an *unforgiving* God, who never overlooks our mistakes, but rules with an iron hand of destiny, it is no use trying to recover from our failures:

"The moving finger writes; and having writ,
Moves on; nor all your piety and wit,
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it."

So it must be—if there be no reconciliation between God and His world.

But if on the Cross we learn to see a God who bears no malice, but forgives, even through pain to Himself, then our souls are freed from the burden of guiltiness and the bondage of Fate, and we are encouraged to rise from our failure to strive upward once more. Because the Cross brings a message of reconciliation, it opens the way for recovery after failure.

Now turn to St. Paul's second phrase, "Saved by His life," or (more literally) "Saved *in* His life." Just as the first phrase, "Reconciled by His death," gives us the true *starting-point* for recovery ~~after~~ failure, so this second phrase shows us the true *method* of recovery; "saved by (or in) the life of Christ."

How are we saved by the life of Christ? Let me take an illustration—inadequate, I know, but yet suggestive. Dean Stanley, in his "Life of Arnold," tells us of the marvellous influence which the great head-master exercised over his boys. It was not only the force of his example within the walls of Rugby School. It was something much greater—a living, *reproductive* power, creating in the lives of old Rugby boys a character and a spirit which seemed as though it were Arnold's own, so that it was said that in public life one of Arnold's boys could generally be known by the "tone" of his life. What that influence meant we know also from the witness of many an old Rugby boy, such as we find in the closing chapter of "Tom Brown's School Days." It meant the entering in of a new spirit into the boy's life—a spirit not

less his own because it was Arnold's ; a spirit which gave him a new outlook and new ideals, new courage to break some of the conventionalities of the early Victorian age, and new strength to fight his sins. To such, it would be no mere metaphor, but sober truth, to say that he had been *saved*—saved from a life of uselessness and selfishness and sin—by and in Arnold's life.

Now, if the life of a man like Arnold, with all his marked faults and failings, can exercise a power like that, how much more must the life of the Perfect Man, Christ Jesus, be a saving-power wherever His influence is felt ? Not only by the force of example, though that is not slight ; but by the power of *self-reproduction* in the hearts of men, so that His life is in us, and ours in Him. That was St. Paul's experience : " I live : yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." And St. Paul knew that this life of Christ was a continual saving-power, freeing him from sin and prejudice, and uplifting him to a wider outlook and a steadier service. Therefore he wrote, looking back upon his own life's history and forward to the great Judgment Day : " Reconciled by His death . . . saved by His life."

It is only by a similar method that the world in this our day can find recovery from its failure and salvation from its sin. It needs to be " saved by the life of Christ."

As the life of Christ, with its distinctive tone and spirit, enters into the world, so will the world be saved and uplifted thereby. Now what is the distinctive " tone " of Christ's life ? It may sound paradoxical, but I believe it is true to say that

the most characteristic moment of Christ's life is to be seen at His *Death*. The Cross expresses the keynote of Christ's life ; it was a " Life of the Cross." All that love and self-forgetfulness for others' sake and for the sake of the wider outlook, which runs through the whole of our Lord's life, reaches its climax on Calvary. There Love is most loving ; there Christ is *most Christly*.

In the sequel to the Cross—the Resurrection—we see the triumph of this " Life of the Cross " ; and we find the vindication of those deep principles which lie at the heart of Christianity : " Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone ; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit " ; " He that loveth his life shall lose it ; but he that loseth his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall find it."

Now, is it not reasonable to claim that if this " Life of the Cross," with its distinctive tone and spirit, could enter into the life of the world to-day, it would bring with it the power of recovery and salvation from the sins which beset us ?

Think what would be the result if the " Life of the Cross " entered more into the social life of our nation. Hitherto, even those who recognise the Life of the Cross as the highest ideal for the individual Christian, have generally dismissed it as impracticable on a wider scale. *Corporate* self-sacrifice is explicitly rejected by many, if not most, professing Christians. They will admit that the *individual* ought not to press his own claims to the detriment of the whole community ; but when individuals are grouped into a class, or trade, or

profession, then it is taken for granted that the self-interest of the group is the only reasonable motive for a business-like mind. We have seen the results of this policy in the last few years—class striving against class, one struggling to gain, and the other to retain, as much as possible, with scarce a thought for the *general* welfare of the nation. For a few months, indeed, the wranglings have been quieted in face of a common danger, but in the past few days* we have seen the old menace raising its head again, and setting class-interests above the safety of the Empire.

Corporate selfishness has proved itself a national danger. Is it inevitable that this should always so be? Or does Christ mean us to apply "the Life of the Cross" to our social relationships, and to try and create a new class-spirit, which shall be ready to look not only at its own interests, but at the interests of the nation at large? It will not be easy. For one thing, a body or class of men acts normally *through its representatives*; and it is very difficult for those who act as the representatives of a larger body to be generous or self-sacrificing. They feel that they are the trustees of others' interests; they do not care to be generous with *other people's* money. This is clearly one of the causes for the increasing selfishness of social relationships in recent times. Employer and employed no longer meet face to face, as man with man; each deals with the other through his agent or delegate; and these latter (however willing as

* 1915 opened with a period of much Labour unrest, and a corresponding denunciation of Labour by the representatives of Capital.

individuals to be generous) only allow one motive to influence their public action—namely, to safeguard the interests of those whom they represent.

It is not easy to counteract this tendency towards an ever-increasing corporate selfishness. Yet it must be counteracted if the national life is to be saved from disintegration and disunion. And the sudden outburst of corporate *un*-selfishness in every class and among divers interests in the first days of the war shows that the task is not impossible.

Here, then, is an ideal that we Christians may work for and pray for—the creation of a *Christian public opinion* within each class and group of interests, which shall be ready to seek not only its own advantage, but the good of the whole community.

If we will but take Christ at His word, and apply His teaching to our social problems in England, I believe that we shall find therein the secret of national greatness. If the Life of the Cross is lived out *corporately* by each class, rich and poor, employer and employed, then in that life the nation will be saved.

The same thought applies, on a yet larger scale, to the world-wide problem of the nations. To-day* the Student Movement links us in prayer with East and West, India and China, Africa and America, France and Denmark—yes, even with Austria and Germany. Yet that bond of prayer

* Day of Prayer for the Student Christian Movement.

is strained to breaking-point in places by the strife of nations. For in every nation the men and women have been caught up in the rising tide of national enthusiasm, which, while it has widened their interests up to a point, has drawn more sharply than ever the line beyond which the sympathies of a true patriot *must* not go. Each nation, or group of allied nations, has become more united within itself, and at the same time more self-centred in its relation to the world at large. Yet, is the world destined always to be the battle-ground of warring peoples? Are *international* relations outside the scope of Christ's teaching? Has "the Life of the Cross" no meaning when applied to the life of the world? Or may we Christians pray for the day when the nations of the earth shall look, not each one on its own things, but each one also on the welfare of the human race? Will the day ever come when a *nation* will make some great act of corporate self-sacrifice and be ready to lose its national life for the sake of the world at large—perhaps in order to destroy the fatal belief in the inevitableness of war when national interests clash?

I do not know. But of this I am sure, that if the Life of the Cross, with its saving power, is to spread, it must spread first through the influence and example of individual Christians, and then through the *corporate* influence and example of the Christian Church. Only in so far as the Church and her members show forth to the world "the Life of the Cross" in action, setting an example of self-control and self-forgetfulness for others' sake, will she be the means of spreading that same

life and spirit, first among the various classes and interests which make up the English nation, and ultimately, among the nations which make up the whole human race. It is through the ministry of the Church and her members that the saving power of the Cross will be mediated to the world.

Herein rests a special responsibility on those of us who have been or hope to be admitted into the Church's ministry. It is through our witness that the world will gain its chief impression of the "tone" of the Church.

Too often, in the past, the corporate witness of the Church has been by no means suggestive of a "Life of the Cross." Clerical conferences and mass meetings of Church-people seem to be generally most enthusiastic when engaged in self-defence or self-assertion. The excellence of our organisations for such purposes has often been beyond all praise; but the objects in view are scarcely those commended by the New Testament. Men of the world have not been slow to notice that the Church, for all her talk about the Cross, has shown in practice far greater enthusiasm in protecting her own income than in championing the cause of the oppressed, or in readiness to suffer loss for the sake of the community at large. Often, her conduct has been that of "a company with very limited liability and unlimited privilege."* And because men have seen the example which the Church has generally set, they have felt relieved from any awkward sense of obligation to follow the Church's profession of faith in the supreme value of self-sacrifice.

* A. C. Turner, in "Concerning Prayer," p. 436.

Of course, there have been exceptions. In the mission-field the Church's witness has on the whole been full of heroic service and sacrifice. In many of the parishes of the home-land, too, the life of the clergy is increasingly true to the principles of Christ crucified, so that the people know that even if their own lot is hard and laborious, at least their priests are men who share the burden with them. Yet still there are not a few parishes where the parson's life is probably "the easiest job" in the whole neighbourhood, or where the luxury of the vicarage is in ironical contrast to the poverty of the people. In such cases, can the parish priest, however amiable and however generous, fairly bear witness to "the Life of the Cross," before men and women whose experience teaches them far more of self-sacrifice than their pastor has ever known in his sheltered life? I know that in such cases it is easy to criticise the clergy, and hard in practice to find a remedy; for we are all bound, in great measure, by the social system in which we are placed; and circumstances, beyond our own control, decide the outward form of our lives. And many a priest who is at heart ashamed of the comparative comfort of his own home is hopelessly at a loss to find a solution to this problem: How can I, under modern conditions, live a life which shall be a truer external witness to the Cross of Christ?

But at least we may all pray that God will plant firmly within our hearts the true "Life of the Cross," and that He will show us how to use all opportunities of witnessing to it by acts of service and sacrifice. Then men will see in our lives

some reflection of the glory of Calvary ; and the Cross will draw them to Christ, as it has drawn men . all through the ages ; and in the Life of the Cross they—and we—shall find our salvation and our peace.

XIII.

THE THRESHOLDS OF LIFE.

July 11th, 1915.

(Last Sunday of College Term.)

PSALM CXXI. 8.

"The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore."

HAVE you ever stood by the thoroughfare to some great city—say London Bridge—in the morning hours, and watched the stream of workers and business men pouring across into the heart of the great City? On and on they pass, a steady, ceaseless, endless rush, till the eye is almost dizzy with hurrying figures, and the ear tired with the clatter of feet.

Or have you stood there in the evening, when the human tide has turned, and the same stream is flowing away from the City, pouring out to the suburbs after the day's work is done? If so, you will be able to give a vivid meaning to those words of the Psalmist: "Thy going out and thy coming in."

Of course, the Psalmist had not witnessed such

scenes on the large scale of modern civilisation. But, doubtless, he had stood by the city gates, or, it may be, by the door of the house or cottage, and had watched the same drama of life on a smaller scale ; men and women passing to and fro, in and out, between the home and the world, across the threshold which divided the public life of the world from the private life of the home. And as he watches, he utters half a prayer, half a promise : " The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in ! "

" Thy going out." He knew of the dangers of " going out " in those days. For the shepherd-lad on the hillside, or the worker in the fields—danger from wild beasts, from storm and tempest and sunstroke ; for the men of war—" the terror by night, and the arrow that flieth by day." Perhaps he had seen some of his own lads go out to the mountains or to the battlefields as he wrote the words :

" The Lord is thy keeper ; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand ;
The sun shall not smite thee by day ; neither the moon by night.
The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil ; He shall preserve thy soul ;
He shall preserve thy going out."

" And thy coming in." For he knew of the dangers of the home-coming. He knew that many a life which had won honour and glory in the fields of public service had met with its ruin in the home-life. The stories of King David and King Solomon stood not alone in the history of Israel. For many a lesser man had also found that it is comparatively

easy to be brave and noble in the romance and glamour of the great world and its doings, but very hard to keep one's ideals untarnished amid the petty worries and temptations of the home. So the Psalmist knew how grave was the need for the prayer: "The Lord preserve thy coming in."

He knew the need. And yet it is not the sense of need, nor of danger, which forms the real keynote of the Psalm; but rather that word which occurs in almost every verse: "*Thy Keeper*," "*Thy Preserver*." "He is so absorbed in the thought of his Preserver that he barely names his dangers." He has learnt to feel the Presence of the Lord about him; in the majesty of the hills, in the silence of the night, in the blaze of the noon-day sun. The Lord crosses the threshold with him in the morning as he goes out into the world; the Lord meets him on the threshold in the evening as he comes back into his home; and so he writes these words of perfect simplicity and trustfulness which have inspired many a soul in days of anxiety:

"The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in,
From this time forth and even for evermore."

What is the modern significance of our text? Surely it brings to our lips a prayer full of meaning just now: "The Lord preserve thy going out." Never, I suppose, has that prayer been on so many lips as of late—ay, and on many lips little used to prayer. For there are few—however careless—who can watch the brown ranks of lads passing down the streets on the way to the Front without some sort of prayer: "The Lord preserve thy going out!"

But not only for our soldiers is the prayer needed. For our statesmen, as they go out day by day to face a burden of work that is crushing, and responsibilities that strain the nerves and mind to breaking-point—"The Lord preserve their going out." For our artisans, as they go out morning by morning to the deadly routine of overtime work in factory or mine—work often wearisome in its monotony, yet vital in its importance to the nation—"The Lord preserve their going out." For our clergy, as they face the problems of a changing world—a world newly awakened from its complacency, impatient and yet expectant in its attitude to spiritual things—"The Lord preserve their going out," as they go to speak of the things that are not seen, and are eternal.

To us, as a college, our text comes with a special significance to-day. It always comes with significance at the close of a term, when we bid farewell to some who are leaving us for their life's work, and pray that the Lord will preserve their going out and coming in among their people.

But this year, more than in most years, the message comes home to us all. We are going out from college into a Long Vacation full of uncertainties. For some it may bring new experiences—service on battle-field or munition-factory, in paths unsought, unthought of a few months ago. But whatever be the path of our going out—even if for some it should prove to be the outgoing into the Unseen World of wider service beyond the grave—whatever and whithersoever the going out may be, for a Christian man it will not be unguarded nor unwatched by our Father in heaven.

The Lord shall preserve the going out of each one who leaves this college this term.

“And our coming in.” For to-day, as of old, the private life is closely bound up with the public service. And the second part of our text reminds us of the sacredness of home-life, and the sacredness of our private life before God.

Most of our soldiers know the value of home-life. It is the memory of home which is helping many a man to be brave and strong; it is the hope of that home, to come back to, which inspires him to be steadfast through the hours of trial. And as we think of the day when our soldiers shall come home again, we pray that the Lord may preserve their coming in. For is it not (in great part) *for the sake of the home-life* of England that we are waging this campaign—in order that the homes of England may be secure and happy in days to come? But unless the Lord preserve the coming in, the going out to battle will have been but in vain. Unless the victory of our cause is followed by the purification of our national life at its inmost springs in the home, it will be but little worth.* So pray that the Lord may preserve the coming in after victory, and knit together the homes of England in unity of devotion to our Mother-land and to our Father in heaven.

“O you, who toil and suffer,
You gladly heard the call;
But those you sometimes envy,
Have they not given their all?”

* In this connection a great work is being done by the *League of the Spiritual War*, with its call to the nation to make the home-life of England worthy to welcome the men when they return.

O you, who rule the nation,
Take now the toil-worn hand ;
Brothers you are in sorrow,
In duty to your land.
Learn but this noble lesson,
Ere peace returns again,
And the life-blood of old England
Will not be shed in vain."

" The Lord shall preserve thy coming in." The words come home to us all in a yet more personal sense. For most of us know that it is in the inner, private life that we most of all need the keeping-power of God.

It is often harder to be a consistent Christian in the home circle, with its small but searching trials, than in the (more or less) public life of the college. Certainly, for the parish priest, to practise what he preaches is often harder in the home than in the public activities of the parish. And few annals of clerical life are more pathetic than the record of a powerful ministry marred by a broken home-life.

Nor is our text any the less pertinent for the young clergyman in his lodgings. I shall never forget the impression made on my own mind when I read, just on the eve of Ordination, those sections of the Bishop of Durham's "To my Younger Brethren," which are headed, "Life in Lodgings." The quiet searching examination of the details of the young curate's life is one that no man on the threshold of the ministry can read without being stirred to new thoughtfulness:—"There (in the lodgings) the day at least begins and ends; and in more ways than he is aware of . . . he may—or may not—glorify his Master there.  He is quite

certain to be watched, whether the eyes are friendly or unfriendly . . . watched not only as a man, but as a minister. And the results of the observation . . . are pretty sure to reach many other people." Dr. Moule goes on to speak of those little matters of considerateness and self-respect, of punctuality at meal-time, and self-restraint under small provocations, which make or mar the consistency of the young clergyman's private life.

But remember that at the heart of the private life lies the time for private prayer and communion with God. If that is let slip, your landlady, and those who live in the house with you, will soon get to know of it, and in time the parish will know it too. Ay, and the spiritual powerlessness of your own ministry will confirm the rumour. And yet there is nothing more difficult for the hard-worked clergyman than to guard that "coming in" into the Presence of God from intrusion and curtailment. Pray one for another, brethren, that the Lord may preserve this coming in to Him day by day.

In closing, let us think of the *Christian* significance of these words: "The Lord preserve thy going out and thy coming in." To the Psalmist they brought memories of the Lord Jehovah, the great God who had preserved His people through many a crisis, many a long campaign; "the Lord strong and mighty, even the Lord mighty in battle."

To us, the words come with a tenderer, more intimate note; for the Lord has revealed Himself to us as *our* Lord—our Lord Jesus Christ. In

the life and death of Jesus we have learnt to recognise the countenance of God our Preserver, and to realise more clearly His wisdom and His Love. The God who preserves us Himself crossed the threshold of human life at Bethlehem, and **crossed** the threshold of human death at Calvary. So we are assured that His grace will go with us each day, to and fro across the threshold between the home-life and the public work ; He will go with us across the last great threshold into the Unknown life which to Him is not unknown ; He will be with us at our coming in to that Kingdom which He has promised to them that love Him. Our Lord shall preserve our going out and our coming in, from this time forth for evermore.

XIV.

TRUTHFULNESS IN RELIGION.

[Reprinted from the "*Modern Churchman*," April, 1916].

October 17th, 1915.

PROVERBS XXIII. 23.

"Buy the truth, and sell it not."

TRUTHFULNESS is one of the qualities which are absolutely indispensable in the character of all who would become leaders of men. And by "truthfulness" I mean, not only a scrupulous accuracy of statement, but a complete honesty of purpose, an absence of the intention to deceive, whether by word or action, or by the silence which is sometimes as eloquent as any speech. It is true that a dishonest man may for a time acquire a great influence over his fellows; but this influence lasts only so long as he is able to impose upon them. Whenever the mask of deception is torn away, his power vanishes with it. Men will follow strange leaders sometimes—hard task-masters, wild fanatics, misguided enthusiasts; but rarely, if ever, will they yield themselves to follow one whom they *know* to be insincere.

Now the life-work of the Christian minister is (or ought to be) a work of leadership. Unless the clergy can, in some measure, guide and inspire the lives of others, their office will be of little value.

And yet I imagine that we are all conscious that the clerical office in England to-day is not wholly free from *the suspicion of insincerity*. You will not, of course, find much reference to that suspicion in the pages of the Church Press; nor are the clergy (nor even theological students) perhaps the most likely persons to hear open expressions of it in their presence. But in the pages of the less orthodox theological journals it is a constant theme for correspondence and discussion; and I expect that those of you who have mixed freely with men of various types have heard evidences of it often enough.

Men are ready enough to grant that the clergy of to-day are, on the whole, men of energy and self-sacrifice and kindness; but they would hesitate to add to the list of clerical virtues a real passion for truth at all costs, or a readiness to face the deeper problems of life with entire honesty and sincerity of purpose.

Have you ever noticed, for instance, the following contrast? If a notable man of science makes a pronouncement with regard to some religious question, the general public are anxious to hear what he has to say. He may be but an amateur in theology; but he is believed to be at least an honest seeker after truth. If, on the other hand, a leader of religion (who does not happen to be also a qualified scientist) ventures to comment

upon some problem of science, he is dismissed with an amused contempt, and told not to meddle in matters outside his own province. And why? Because it is assumed that he has a theological axe to grind, and is not simply anxious to find the truth for its own sake.

I am not contending that the assumption is always correct; but merely that it exists. And if it exists, it is surely well that we should look it fairly in the face, and not shirk its consideration as an unpleasant topic. For if it is a mistaken impression, it can only be refuted by those who have taken the trouble to think out the causes which have produced it, and who realise what measure of truth (if any) it contains.

Now the suspicion of clerical insincerity seems to me to be bound up, in part, with certain features of clerical life which cannot be, and indeed ought not to be, entirely removed.

One such feature is this: that the priest—like the lawyer, and (to a lesser degree) the statesman—deals with truth expressed in *fixed forms*.

In the case of the lawyer, these forms are the laws of the land; in the case of the statesman, the traditions of his party and the Constitution of his country; in the case of the priest, Bible and Creeds and Articles. Now fixed forms for the expression of truth are inevitable and invaluable. They guide and check the extravagances of individuals; they form a firm backbone within the life of the society or nation.

But at the same time fixed forms have this disadvantage; they do not grow together with the

growth of human thought and life. Thought moves on; they remain unchanged; or at least, if they are changed, it is not till long after the change in men's thoughts. You cannot legislate (we are often reminded) in advance of public opinion; human life and thought change first, and then, later on—sometimes much later on—the laws are adapted to the changed conditions.

Now it follows that those who have to deal with the outward forms and expressions of truth are often confronted with the claims of a double loyalty—an "immediate loyalty" to the fixed forms to which they have in many cases solemnly pledged themselves; and a "wider loyalty" to all that is true and noble—including perhaps truths which they have only lately come to realise, and which do not seem to be fully covered by the ancient formulæ.

So it is with the lawyer; he owes an "immediate loyalty" to the law of the land, which he has sworn to administer; so the statesman owes an "immediate loyalty" to the Constitution of which he is a member; but they both owe also a "wider loyalty" to the welfare of their country; and there are times when the letter of the law does not seem wholly fitted to serve the common weal, or when an ancient Constitution is inadequate for the needs of a growing empire.

Then arises the problem of a double loyalty; and then comes the critic's opportunity to bring his charge of insincerity. If the nearer loyalty is faithfully maintained, we hear scornful charges of blindness and obscurantism; if the wider loyalty is felt to be more compelling, and the new truths

are welcomed, we are asked with indignation, What of your solemn vows and pledges?

I need not point out how acutely this problem confronts the clergy. More than others, we are solemnly pledged to certain fixed expressions of religious belief; more than others, we ought to be men of vision, ready to hear and answer the Spirit who guides into all truth.

On the whole, the tendency of the clerical mind always seems to be to concentrate attention on the nearer loyalty—the faithful adherence to ancient forms of belief and practice; and sometimes the claim of the wider loyalty to *truth* at all times and at all costs seems to be almost forgotten.

And here, it seems to me, we come to the root of the charge of insincerity which is brought against the clergy. Men believe that the bigger problems of life are not really approached with a fair mind by the leaders of religion; that they pre-judge the case without ever really troubling to weigh the evidence. Instead of asking: Is this true? they ask, Is it orthodox? Facts must be made to fit into the clerical standard of orthodoxy, and if not, so much the worse for the facts; they can at least receive no ecclesiastical recognition.

Is this an unfair charge? I fear not entirely; and I would appeal in confirmation of this to the story of the long conflict between Church and science. You know how every important advance in scientific knowledge has been met by the Church with suspicion and opposition. The cry has been raised that "The Faith is in danger!" and pulpit and Press have rung with ecclesiastical denunciations, fierce in language, futile in effect. For the

judgment of the Church upon the progress of science has again and again been reversed by the verdict of history.

Let us take a few instances. From the fourth to the fifteenth century the Church strove to suppress the novel theory that the earth is spherical and not flat ; and Colombus, when he was planning to sail round the world, was confronted with a long array of proof-texts from the Fathers to prove the impiety of such an attempt.* Or, again, when some bold astronomers in the sixteenth century dared to suggest that the earth is not the centre of the Universe, all Christendom was scandalised ; and Martin Luther and the Papal authorities agreed, for once, that the new theory was unscriptural and profane.†

And so in more recent times. The triumphs of science in the nineteenth century were contested, inch by inch, by the leaders of the Church ; and contested in vain. And why ? Not because the clergy were insincere, in the sense that they *consciously* attacked what they believed to be true. No ; they were perfectly honest in their fear and dislike of the new theories. But they *were* insincere in this : that they could not or would not face the facts fairly and impartially ; they first decided that they were not going to believe in the new theories, and then searched for reasons why they should disbelieve them.

You may remember the historic scene at the British Association Meeting in Oxford in 1860,

* Bonney, " Present Relations of Religion and Science," p. 185.

† Bonney, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

when Wilberforce and Huxley crossed swords over the Theory of Evolution ; how the famous prelate tried to " score a point " by a clever thrust which won him thunders of applause ; and then the hot anger of the man of science broke out in crushing retort :

" The Right Reverend Prelate thinks it discreditable to be descended from an ape ; I will tell him what is much *more* discreditable ; and that is, to prostitute great gifts of eloquence in order to discredit a theory which he has never fairly examined ! " *

Whatever the merits of that particular controversy, Huxley laid his finger on a really weak spot in the clerical character—the timid refusal fairly to face new truth, the readiness to condemn without fair trial, the use of questionable methods—misrepresentation and exaggeration—in order to try and secure a victory. Such methods " sell the truth."

I know that there are reasons—excuses, if you will—for this. As priests, we know that we are stewards of a great treasure—even the Gospel of the Grace of God—which has changed our lives, and can change the lives of others. And since this treasure is contained (in part) in the earthen vessels of human words and acts, we cannot but be cautious in approaching anything which seems to threaten even the earthen vessels. The treasure is so great, the issues at stake are so vital, that we dare not gamble with new speculations, as men might gamble who have little to lose. For

* The exact words which Huxley used are variously reported ; see the " Life of T. H. Huxley," by his son, Vol. I, pp. 179-187.

this reason, and because of our pledged loyalty to the traditional forms which we have inherited, it is perhaps unlikely that the clergy should ever be pioneers of new thought.

But if in the future, with its new and tremendous opportunities, we are to be men of influence and of leadership, we shall need to show that, whatever may be true of the past, the clergy of to-day are not afraid of the truth.

Too often we have tried to shelter the Gospel with our formularies as if it were a hot-house plant ; we have not really trusted it, nor allowed it to stand out in its simple grandeur as the message of the Love of God. Yet surely we need not be so afraid for the Gospel? Has it not amply proved its own strength? In spite of the repeated failures of the Church's *methods of defence*, the Church's *message* remains a living power, unconquered and unconquerable.

And if we may (as indeed we must) admit that the leaders of religion have often been blind to newly discovered truths, surely we are entitled to point out that sometimes the leaders of science have been inclined to shut their eyes to the old, but never antiquated, truths of our *spiritual* nature—those facts of religious experience which are no less real because they are not all explained by the known laws of physical science. The things of the Spirit—divine love, divine communion, divine peace—cannot be analysed or codified ; but neither can they without grievous loss be ignored.

These are the truths which we, as clergy, have specially to guard and proclaim. But let us remember that there can never be any real conflict

between these and the other facts of life. If we are called to preach the Gospel of love, let us bear in mind St. Paul's words: "Love rejoiceth with the truth."

Sometimes men such as Huxley seem to us strangely blind to spiritual things. But I would to God that we "religious people" could catch that splendid enthusiasm for truth which inspired Huxley's life-work. Do you know those brave and yet pathetic words which he wrote to Charles Kingsley in the midst of a bereavement which for him was not lightened by the rays of Christian hope? :

"I could have fancied a devil . . . asking me what *profit* it was to have stripped myself of the hopes and consolations of the mass of mankind? To which my only reply was and is: O devil, *Truth* is better than much profit. . . . If wife and child and name and fame were all to be lost to me one after the other as the penalty, still I will not lie."

Mistaken—yes, no Christian can doubt that Huxley was mistaken; yet, behind his unfaith in dogmas lay a mighty faith in truth—a faith which puts many of us to shame.

"There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the Creeds."

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How can we best express the true Christian attitude towards this perplexing problem of old traditions and new discoveries? It seems to me

that we may find the answer in the great precept of our Lord: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children . . ."

"*Be converted.*" For, if once our life has been touched and turned by a Power that we know is not our own; if we have felt the hand of a Father in heaven guiding our life; then we have reached a bed-rock of faith, and we can face life's problems trustfully, humbly, and bravely. We can go out into the unknown, knowing that we are the inheritors of all that is good and beautiful and true; for these things are our Father's; and so in a measure they are ours too.

"—— *And become as little children.*" For sometimes the converted man seems to forget that he is but a little child, and speaks as though he knew all about his Father in heaven. Nay; let us remember that we all are but little children in our knowledge of God. Yet even a child's knowledge is capable of wondrous growth under a father's care; and if we will come to our Father day by day in prayer and worship and sacrament, we may be confident that many a dark problem will become clearer as He explains it to us, and many an unexplored land will become familiar ground as He shows us the way.

XV.

STEPHEN AND PAUL—THE FRUITS OF MARTYRDOM.

January 30th, 1915.

(The Sunday after the Conversion of St. Paul.)

ACTS VII. 60 ; VIII. 1.

“ And when he [Stephen] had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul was consenting unto his death.”

WHY is it that St. Luke adds that last sentence at the close of his narrative of St. Stephen's martyrdom? It reads almost as if it were an afterthought, a postscript; so much so, that in our English Bible it is separated and stands at the head of the next chapter. And yet a moment's thought will show us that it clearly belongs to the preceding narrative; and indeed I think that we can see that it was needed there. For it stands at the end of the story, in order to remind us that it is not really the end. Stephen's work for Christ was not closed when that last cry had been uttered, and the bruised body sank into a lifeless heap. It *seemed* to be the end; it *was* only the end of

one chapter. And St. Luke, ere he closes his story, hints at the opening of another chapter in these words: "Saul was consenting unto his death."

For in a very real sense the life and influence of Stephen lived on again in Saul of Tarsus, afterwards Paul the Apostle. At the time, no doubt, as he stood in the crowd, a young Pharisee of the Pharisees, he was mightily pleased with himself and the part he had played in stamping out the new heresy. But Saul was not master of his own destiny; and, in spite of himself, the scene which he had witnessed fastened itself on his memory, and haunted him with an uneasiness that grew and would not be silenced; until one day when Christ came to him outside Damascus, and touched the outer husk of his Pharisaism, it broke at the touch; and within there was found a burning enthusiasm ready to burst forth in lifelong service to the cause for which Stephen had pleaded, and the Christ for whom Stephen had died.

St. Paul does not often refer to St. Stephen in his writings. It must have been a painful subject for him. But once, at least, when he stands on the steps of the Roman barracks at Jerusalem, and looks down upon the seething crowd—perhaps composed in part of the very same men who had taken part *with him*, a few years earlier, in the stoning of Stephen—then he speaks of it: "When the blood of Stephen thy martyr was shed, I also was standing by."* Surely we can catch in those words the bitterness of self-reproach, and the undying sense of obligation towards the man whom

* Acts xxii, 20.

he had wronged, and yet through whom he had been led to find the full meaning of life in Christ :

" Stephen, who died while I stood by consenting,
Wrought in his death the making of a life ;
Bruised one hard heart to thought of swift repenting,
Fitted one fighter for a nobler strife.

" Stephen, the saint, triumphant and forgiving,
Prayed while the hot blows beat him to the earth ;
Was that a dying ? Rather was it living !
Through his soul's travail my soul came to birth."

Yes! Stephen lived again in the life of Paul. And we can imagine that as he watched from behind the veil the work of his former persecutor, he rejoiced with great joy ; for " he saw of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied." So the blood of the first martyr became the seed of the Church.

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" That they may see of the travail of their souls, and be satisfied." Is not this at the heart of our prayers for those who to-day are giving themselves for England's cause ? However great the sorrow, and however deep the pain, we would not grudge it, if only—if only—we can feel sure that it is not to be all in vain. That is the greatest of all questions which confronts us English men and women to-day : Is the blood shed on the battle-fields of Europe going to be the seed of a better world ; or is it going to be all in vain ? . . . We dare not think of that second alternative ; it is too appalling.

But remember this : God entrusts the after-results of martyrdom to the living men and women

who form the coming generation; just as He entrusted the after-results of St. Stephen's work to the Apostle St. Paul. And to-day, you and I, the men and women of England, are trustees charged by God with a solemn duty—to gather in the fruits of the sacrifice of England's manhood. I need not remind you of our obligation. Our very lives here, in comparative peace and comfort, our homes, our property—all have been bought with a price—the price of British lives. And we owe it to these to spare no effort in order that the cause they had at heart may prosper in days to come.

What is the cause for which they have died? Cannot the answer be given in one word—"England"? "England"—how much that word means to most of us! It speaks of Kentish orchards smiling to greet us after crossing the dull plains of central France; of the rolling moors of the North, and the broken tumble of red Devonshire hills; ay, and of English friendships and English homes. What wonder if men who have known England thus have given their all to save her from harm!

But if so, how great is the obligation which rests on us to guard worthily that which they have preserved for us!

And how? Partly, by steadfastness and faith and courage; by refusal to give way to despondency, or idle gossip, or the criticism which only weakens the national strength; by cheerful readiness to endure to the end, until our cause is won; all this we owe.

But there is something more. If the sacrifice is not to be in vain, we need to pray not only for strength to win the victory, but also for wisdom to

use it. For victory may be either the gateway to national greatness or to national ruin. If the nation that is victorious has not learnt through the discipline of war to purge itself of selfishness and class-hatred and party-spirit, the victory over foes without may easily be followed by strife among fellow-citizens within ; and the last state of that nation is worse than the first.

My brethren, this is no imaginary danger for us to-day. We cannot forget those dark days *before* the War-cloud burst in 1914, when the policy of "every class for itself," "every party for itself," had led us (as it was logically bound to do) on to the steep downward path which was bringing us to the very edge of civil war. God saved us then from that horror by the trumpet-call of the European conflict. But we cannot shut our eyes to the signs that as the war drags on, the old spirit is raising its head and its voice amongst us again ; and if it is unchecked, it will lead us back to the bad old paths. Can we imagine a more pathetic tragedy than this—that the joys of victory won by England's fighting-men in Europe should be lost in the welter of party-strife and class-warfare and (perhaps) civil war in the home-land ?

God forbid ! we say. But if so, remember our own obligations. Most of us represent some class, some party, some school of thought within the nation. We need not forego these lesser allegiances, but we do need to subordinate them to the greater claims of our country. It is for us to show that we think not first of "standing up for our rights," but of discharging our responsibilities ; not first of criticising others, but rather of examining that point of

view which we ourselves share. There is need for a *corporate unselfishness* on the part of each class, each party, each Church, within the nation, each looking not only on its own things, but also on the things of others. Only so can we safeguard the national unity; only so can we secure that those who have suffered for England shall not have suffered in vain.

But there is one class of those who have fought for England to whom we owe (it seems to me) a peculiar obligation. To *us*, "England" is indeed a name full of noble memories of things beautiful and good and true. But there is *another* England—known perhaps to some of you only by repute or by a passing glimpse from a railway-train—the long line of dock-side parishes in Liverpool or Poplar or Rotherhithe, filthy with mud in winter and foul with stench in summer; the endless rows of dull streets in Whitechapel or Salford; the ceaseless gloom of the Black Country with its pits and mines and factories. Not much here to inspire love and loyalty! And yet, from *this* England, men have come forth in their tens of thousands to serve and to suffer and to die. No doubt their motives have been mixed; but some at least of those rough artisans have gone out from a very genuine sense of duty, and a very real love for the England which has not done much for them. And presently some of them will be coming back. What is their reward to be? A life spent in overcrowded tenements, one room for one family? One lifelong struggle against want and disease, knowing that a single slip, one short illness, will mean, for self, and wife,

and little ones—the workhouse? Is *this* going to be England's reward for the men who have gone from homes of poverty to serve her cause? "God forbid!" we instinctively say again. And yet, we may be sure that God will *not* forbid this thing to come to pass so long as the predominant spirit of England is that of self-interest. If men care first and foremost for *money*, and have no time to note the processes by which their money is gained, the vast machine of civilisation is not likely to spare the lives which come athwart its track. Yet, what shall it profit a nation, if it gain the whole world of commerce, and lose in that process the souls of the men who offered themselves for the nation's cause? *

But the spirit of self-interest is a spirit exceeding strong, and firmly entrenched in our national life. He will not be cast out by vague sentiments of pity, or by New Year's resolutions, forgotten ere a week is out.

There is only one Spirit strong enough to cast him out; and that is the Spirit who comes to us in the Christmas message—the Spirit of Him who left the comforts of heaven in order to share the troubles of earth; who did not stand upon His dignity as Son of God, but for our sakes humbled Himself, even unto the death of the Cross. He it is, and He alone, living and working in the hearts of English men and women, who can make our land a better home for the men who shall come

* Cf. E. A. Burroughs, in "The Fight for the Future":—"To have broken Prussian militarism will be no help to the Kingdom of Christ, unless we also smash in the process the English worship of wealth" (p. 101).

back from the battle, and worthier of those whose blood has been shed.

But can it be? Or is it merely a useless dream? May I give my answer in the form of a recent experience—an experience which, to me, is also a parable? One day, about a fortnight ago, I was crossing Rivington Pike—one of the steep bluffs which the Pennine Range thrusts out over the Lancashire Plains. It was a grey, cold day, and the East wind was bringing up dense masses of smoke from the collieries and factories below, blotting all trace of sky or clouds overhead. But suddenly, the smoke-pall broke, and through the rift we saw a patch of clear blue sky, and in the midst a little white fleecy cloud, lit up by the winter's sun. It was only for a moment; then the black frame closed in on the picture, and we saw it no more. But I am sure that we went on, through the dark mist, cheered by the glimpse; for we had seen for a moment the sun and the blue sky with our own eyes—not in imagination or in memory, but in sober fact.

And surely we, in England, caught a glimpse, in the summer and autumn of last year, of what England could be, and actually *was*, for a time. We saw a nation one in heart and purpose, with the voice of faction stilled, and the spirit of service surging up on every hand. To-day the clouds of controversy and discontent have to some extent closed in again. But we have seen enough, surely, to save us from a hopeless acquiescence in inevitable decline; our ideal for England is certainly not *impossible*; for with our own eyes we saw it for a time. So we turn to work—some by prayer,

some by active service, some by quiet influence—
for the England that is to be.

“ O see that ye build securely,
When the time for building comes,
With square-hewn blocks of Righteousness
And corner-stones of Faithfulness
And girders strong of Righted Wrong,
And the blood of our Martyrdoms!

“ And—build on the One Foundation
That shall make the building sure—
The Rock that was laid ere the world was made ;
Build on Him, and ye build secure! ”

XVI.

JOHN WESLEY—A HERALD OF SPIRITUAL REVIVAL.

February 27th, 1916.

2 CORINTHIANS XI. 26.

"In journeyings often; in perils of waters; in perils of robbers; in perils by mine own countrymen."

ON April 2nd, 1762, rather more than 150 years ago, a little group of persons were gathered at five o'clock in the morning in one of the houses on the quayside at Parkgate on the Dee, just six miles from this college. Parkgate was then a port of some importance, and the sailing-packets for Dublin were regularly despatched from there. So it was no uncommon thing to find a group of passengers in the little house which was used as a shelter, waiting for the wind to shift, in order that their sailing-vessel might be able to leave the river. But in this particular group there was something quite unusual. For one of the would-be passengers is speaking earnestly, intensely, to the rest; and those who listen find that he is speaking of the love of God in Christ Jesus. And a sermon in an

ordinary travellers' shelter, at five o'clock on a weekday morning, was no ordinary event, especially in the eighteenth century!

Who was the preacher? He was the one man of the eighteenth century whose name is still a household word in almost every Christian home—*John Wesley*. If the greatness of men is to be measured by the extent of their influence on their fellow-men, both during their own lifetime and afterwards, John Wesley must certainly take rank among the very greatest. It would be hard to name any other figure in the long history of English Christianity who has had so vast an influence on the national religion, both within and without the National Church.

That influence was in part the fruit of a life of unparalleled activity and tireless energy. I do not know how many of you are familiar with John Wesley's *Journal*? It is a book quite unique (so far as I know) in the history of literature. Nowhere else—hardly even in the life of St. Paul—can you find so amazing a record of a life strenuous beyond all belief. It is true that Wesley's travels were not in many lands. Except for his three years' work as an S.P.G. missionary in America, and a month's holiday in Holland in his eightieth year, he rarely, if ever, set foot on foreign soil. But within the British Isles his travels were more than apostolic. Even in these days of swift railway-travel, there are probably few—if indeed any—men living who have covered England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland as John Wesley covered them on horseback. In the course of those fifty years of his preaching ministry he

averaged well over five thousand miles a year,* sometimes, with the help of relays of horses, riding ninety miles without a break. The *Journal* almost makes us dizzy with its record of rapid changes. One day we find him at Falmouth, facing a furious mob of Cornish miners threatening to stone him to death ; a fortnight later, crossing the snow-covered passes of the Grampians, pushing forward on foot when his horse drops from sheer exhaustion ; then back in London, called secretly to visit and advise someone of high rank but of sinful soul ; then in the far West of Ireland (he crossed the Channel forty-two times in fifty years, in boats no bigger than a fishing-smack) ; back again in the big Lancashire towns ; northwards to Newcastle ; south once more to Bristol. . . . So the tale goes on and on. It is unique ; almost incredible. " In journeyings often, . . . in perils by mine own countrymen."

Remember, too, these journeyings were but the *framework* of Wesley's real life-business. As soon as ever he reached his destination (for Wesley was not a man who needed a rest to recover from a journey !) he began his real business—the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. In season and out of season he preached, using every spare moment (as we saw him on the quay at Parkgate), speaking in churches where he had the opportunity, or in the open-air where churches were forbidden him. In those fifty years he preached forty thousand times—eight hundred sermons per annum.*

Nothing seemed to stop him. If he felt tired out, he turned to prayer, and rose again refreshed and strong. Once, indeed, we read that the weary

* So Mr. Birrell estimates, in his Introduction to the *Journal*.

limbs gave way, and he found himself unable to stand ; but even then he dragged himself to the pulpit, and half kneeling, half holding to the pulpit-desk, he gave his message to the people. On another occasion, his horse failed him twelve miles from his destination (which was Inverness) ; but the old man (he was eighty-one years old at the time), nothing daunted, walked on ; “ and blessed be God ” (he adds), “ I was no more tired at the end than when I set out, and preached to a large congregation.” Right up to the end his zeal keeps strong. At the age of eighty-four, he remembers one part of the British Isles where he has not preached, and feels a Pauline longing to preach there also. So he sets sail for the one hundred miles voyage to the Channel Islands, and preaches, day in, day out, for a month. Then on with his work for another four years, though the veteran's strength was ebbing, but still preaching ; till, at the age of eighty-eight, he gave his last sermon, at Leatherhead, in Surrey. Eight days later, the end came, quietly and from sheer old age ; and the last words on the lips of the man of God were words of praise to God and farewell to man.

It was a very wonderful life. I have spoken of it this morning because (with all its weaknesses and all its faults—and they were many) it was a life which touched the heart of a nation, as few lives have been able to do. And to-day, when the National Mission is calling to us all to help bring home to our nation the message and Spirit of Christ, it is, I think, worth our while to study the life of such an one as John Wesley, not neces-

sarily in order to imitate his methods, but in order to learn the secret of his power.

Where did the secret lie? The answer seems to me to be a threefold one.

First and foremost, John Wesley was a *man with a personal experience of God*. The story of his conversion at the meeting in Aldersgate Street, London, is so well known that I need not repeat it here. However we explain it, it was an intensely *real* experience; and one of the greatest of modern historians—Lecky—has said that that meeting marks “an epoch in English history.” All through Wesley’s preaching runs the refrain (often expressed, always implied), “Come hither, and hearken, and I will tell you what God hath done for my soul.” His preaching was not the recitation of a formula, but the relating of an experience.

Yet Wesley’s experience of God did not rest merely on the past; it was in the present also. For Wesley was a great man of prayer, and he saw and felt all around him the hand of God in the ordinary events of life. This it was which gave him that marvellous quietness and courage in face of danger and criticism. Let me quote two instances. The first was at Falmouth, in 1745. The local clergy had inflamed the people by circulating the popular slanders against Wesley’s character; and the result is thus described in the *Journal*:

“I rode to Falmouth, and went to see a lady who had long been indisposed. Almost as soon as I sat down, the house was beset on all sides by a crowd of people, who forced open the front door, and filled the passage.” The ladies fled, just as the door of the room was burst and fell into the

room. "I stepped into the mob (largely composed of rough sailors from the privateers in the harbour) and said: 'Here I am. To which of you have I done any wrong?' I continued speaking as I passed bareheaded into the street; and by then the people were still, and swore that not a man should touch me."

That was typical of Wesley's quiet courage in dealing with infuriated mobs. Now turn to another picture, this time at the Spa at Bath, where Beau Nash, the idol of the fashionable world of the day, had announced his intention to make fine sport of the Methodist preacher. It was a strange encounter—the man of the world and the man of God face to face. Nash was the first to begin: "By what authority do you preach in this way?"—"By the authority of Jesus Christ, conveyed to me by the Archbishop of Canterbury, when he laid hands on me, and said, 'Take thou authority to preach the Gospel.'"—"But this is contrary to Act of Parliament! . . . and besides, your preaching frightens people out of their wits."—"Sir," said Wesley, "did you ever hear me preach?"—"No."—"How then can you judge of what you have never heard?"—"By common report."—"Sir," was the grave reply, "I dare not judge of *you* by common report; I think it not enough to judge by." And the man of the world retired discomfited; for common report played fast and loose with Nash's character. Once again, in quietness and confidence, Wesley's strength had triumphed; because, whether facing the blind fury of the mob, or the cold cynicism of the man of fashion, he lived in the ever-present experience of the God who had saved him.

Secondly, Wesley was *a man with a message*. "Woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel!" was as true of Wesley as of any man that has ever lived. And the "Gospel" which he preached was the simple message of the love of God in Christ Jesus—a love which is powerful to save from any and every sin. It was a message intensely real to Wesley himself, rooted (as we have seen) in his own experience. To his hearers, it seemed to be a *new message*; they had never heard the like of it before, and it gripped them with all the force of a new revelation. Yet Wesley felt that it was not really a new message; to him, it was simply the old message of Bible and Prayer Book. "I simply preach," he said, "the plain old religion of the Church of England, which is now everywhere spoken against, under the new name of Methodism." The newness of Wesley's message was not in its substance, but in the power and conviction and freedom from conventional restraints with which it was preached. It was a new thing in those days to find a preacher really enthralled by his own message, really pleading with the souls of men as one who knows that the issues at stake are life and death—*eternal* life and *eternal* death; a new thing to hear a man burning to speak to his fellow-men on any and every occasion because he has found the great secret of life's happiness, and longs and yearns to tell it to others. Therefore men and women listened to John Wesley as they had never listened to mortal man before, because they knew that he was a man with a message.

And, thirdly, Wesley was *a man with a singular insight into other men's hearts*. He knew that

at the heart of every human life there lie two great needs—the need for power, and the need for peace. And he knew, too, that beneath all the varieties of human character and temperament there lies one great trouble—and that is, the fact of sin. For whatever the interpretation of the story of the Fall in Genesis, the *fact of a fall* is part of every human experience. “What I would, I do not; what I would not, that I do. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me . . . ?” Wesley’s life-work was to give the answer to that question to the people of England. So his great theme is, How to conquer sin; How to gain power; How to attain to peace. He preached constantly from the great texts of Scripture, enforcing with many an apt illustration the great message of God’s redeeming love in Christ Jesus.

Yet, if Wesley was a man of a single message, he was not a man of limited interests. Art and Literature, and even the Drama, are often referred to in his *Journal*, with shrewd and sympathetic comments. He tells us how he read many books on horseback, making notes as he read, with the reins hanging loose on the horse’s neck. Every side of human life interested him; he was a true student of mankind; yet with one dominant purpose. For he never forgot the great duty of the priesthood, as set forth in the Ordinal of the English Prayer Book: “To draw all cares and studies this one way”—that is, with a view to a more efficient ministry of the Gospel of Christ, and in order to bring home that Gospel more clearly and forcibly to the hearts of men—those hearts

which he read and understood with a sympathy which he learnt from Christ.

I have tried to indicate the threefold secret (as it seems to me) of Wesley's power : his personal experience of God ; his intense consciousness of a message entrusted to him ; and his sympathetic insight into the hearts of men. It is hardly necessary to point out the lessons which we to-day may learn from such a character, at a time when there is a widespread longing for spiritual awakening in the nation, coupled with a consciousness of our own spiritual barrenness and our need for wise and strong leadership. We do well at such a time to study the life of one who was a master in the divine art of awakening the souls of men, and a born leader of those who answered his call.

Such a study will, I think, bring home to us the tremendous possibilities which are lying latent in the Church of Christ. If one man could change the face of England as Wesley changed it—starting, as he did, with no special assets to help him—what might not the Church of Christ do—if she cared, and if she dared ? How absurd to let our hands drop in despair, saying, “ The problems of the future are too appalling ! ” What could not the Church do if she had ten thousand men and women with Wesley's spirit to go and work in England to-day ? And why is that dismissed as impracticable ? God is not holding back His Spirit—we may be sure of that ; the failure is on our side, not on His. The power is offered to the Church of to-day, freely and fully in Christ ; and there is no inherent reason why that spiritual power should not sweep through

the Church to-day as it swept through the life of John Wesley, changing the life of England and uplifting the souls of her children. To men of the world it may seem impossible ; but with God—and with men of God—history shows that such a thing is possible.

That is a splendid hope ; but for us, as Churchmen, there is linked with it a note of warning. You know how the flood-tide of spiritual revival under Wesley broke the boundaries of the organised Church, and formed for itself new channels. And the result was a loss, both to the Wesleyan Movement and to the ancient Church of this land. Probably there were faults on both sides ; but for us Churchmen it is more profitable (and certainly more Christian) to recognise that there was blame on our side than to emphasise the blame on the other. But if so, there is a grave warning for us in the days that are coming. If a spiritual awakening comes, it may easily be through channels unfamiliar and unwelcome ; the prophets who herald its coming will very likely be (as they have often been in the past) men of strange methods and little reverence for the traditions we inherit ; and for many of us it will be easier to denounce than to welcome and guide. And yet, what a tragedy, if a great revival should find the Church deaf and blind, and so pass her by on the other side ! Therefore, pray for ourselves and for our leaders in these days, that we may have the open heart to recognise the Spirit of God wheresoever He works, and also the right judgment to discern the true Spirit of God from the counterfeits which always abound in times of upheaval.

And as we pray thus, our thoughts turn to-day* to the great Movement whose claims have already been brought before us in this college this morning—the Student Christian Movement. In many ways, it may seem a far cry from John Wesley to the Student Movement; the methods and the phraseology seem poles apart. And yet the Student Movement, like John Wesley, has brought a new message and a new vision of God to many souls; like John Wesley, it has proved its power to reach the hearts of many who before were deaf to the Church's gospel. So we may well pray that the Movement, catching something of Wesley's spirit, may help to arouse the students of to-day (the men and women of to-morrow) to the greatness of the spiritual call.

In that work, you and I, called to the ministry of the Church, may (and ought to) have a share. But if we would take our part, it will mean for us, as it meant for Wesley, a life rooted in a real conversion, a life inspired by a real message, a life hallowed by a real sympathy with others, and then surrendered to God, as a vessel meet for the Master's use.

* Day of Prayer for the Student Christian Movement.

XVII.

THE NATIONAL MISSION AND THE CALL TO REPENTANCE.

March 12th, 1916.

ACTS II. 37 f.

"Brethren, what shall we do?" . . . "Repent!"

THE call to repentance is a call which is sounding with increasing insistence in our ears in these days. It has come in many ways ; among others, through the letter of the Archbishops with regard to the National Mission in the autumn,* which is to be entitled "A Mission of *Repentance* and Hope."

Now what do we really mean by "repentance"? It is a word which has lost something of its old strength in the course of time. Often, "repentance" hardly seems to suggest anything more than a feeling of sorrow or regret for something that we have done. We talk of "repenting" in a light-hearted way, as if it were a kind of obvious sequel to wrong-doing, but little more than a temporary *mood*, without much permanent effect on character. But in the New Testament, "repentance"

* Of 1916.

is a much stronger word; it does imply a definite change of outlook and character, and a turning from one kind of life to another. "Ye turned to God from idols," says St. Paul to the Thessalonians. That "turning" was a "repentance" in the New Testament sense; it meant a whole change or conversion of life—the turning away from old interests, old friends, old ideals, and the turning towards *new* ways of life in all its many aspects. Such "turnings" may have to take place frequently in the Christian life; but they must not be mere repetitions of the same act, else the life will be a purposeless ebb and flow. Rather, they are to form a progressive series; each act of repentance leaving its permanent result on the character, each act of turning bringing the life nearer to the Christian ideal, as we come to understand it better.

On the whole, you will find that in the New Testament there is very little difference in meaning between the two terms "repentance" and "conversion"; the former literally means "change of *mind*," and the latter, "change of *outlook*." Both changes are wrought by the power of God; both changes need the response of faith from man; and it is difficult (and perhaps needless) to separate the one change from the other.

Now it is in this strong New Testament sense of repentance that the call to repent comes to us at this time, and especially at this beginning of Lent. It is a call to a *change of mind*, a call to *turn* the *direction* of our life.

There are some who deny that any such call is needed. You may have noticed that the title of the National Mission has been criticised on these

very grounds: "We have nothing to repent of; nothing to be sorry for." Those who speak thus are probably thinking chiefly of the policy of the nation as a whole; but after all, the life of the nation cannot be separated from the lives of its individual members; and so long as these latter are not free from fault, a call to national repentance cannot be unnecessary. And indeed the protests against this call, although not wholly silent, are much fewer and feebler than they would have been had a similar call been sounded a year ago. Not because we are one whit less confident of our cause, but because we are a good deal less confident of our self-righteousness.

"And we ourselves? Are *our* hands clean?
Are our souls free from blame
For this world tragedy?
Nay, then! Like all the rest,
We had relaxed our hold on higher things
And satisfied ourselves with smaller.

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If we would build again, and build to stay,
We must find God again
And go His way."

Such thoughts are in the minds of an increasing number of Englishmen to-day. Yet side by side with this is the bitter recognition that even when the call to repentance is given by the clergy or other leaders of the Church, it often fails to move; it seems dull, artificial, lifeless; it does not, as a rule, convict of sin, or lead to a change of life.

Can we find the root of the trouble? To us, called to the ministry of the Church in these days, this is an urgent question. For unless we can

find an answer, our voices will simply go to swell the chorus of those whose call to repentance rings hollow, conventional, and powerless. While, on the other hand, if we can see how rightly to apply the Gospel of Christ to the modern situation, we shall find that it is still, as it always has been, a power to arrest attention and compel obedience.

Now true repentance—a real change of life—is generally effected either by the power of repulsion, or by the power of attraction; or (it may be) by both powers acting together. Repulsion is the force which drives us away from that which we dislike; attraction draws us towards that which we desire. Take any simple change of life in your own experience, and you will generally find one or both of those two powers at work.

One great repentance-making force is the sense of repulsion from sin. In the true Christian life that feeling becomes a deep-rooted instinct; the Christian soul turns away from all things that are wrong and mean and unclean, as surely and instinctively as the face swerves aside to avoid a blow.

Can we fairly say that this instinctive repulsion from all that is wrong is as strong as it ought to be in English life to-day? Can we fairly say that the need for repulsion from sin is a strong note of modern preaching? How often is a real conviction of sin the result of a twentieth-century sermon?

Frequently, our purpose seems to be to avoid causing offence rather than to convict of sin. I well remember, as a student at Cambridge, an interview with a vicar who desired a curate for a well-known racing-centre in Yorkshire. "If you come

to us," he said, "be careful never to say anything against betting or gambling! . . ." Yes, it is always easier to speak to people about *other* people's sins than about their own. It is easy to harangue a devout congregation on the sins of drunkenness or non-churchgoing; easy to expatiate to a well-to-do congregation on the selfishness of trades-unionism or the thriftlessness of the working-classes. A great deal of our so-called "preaching of repentance" has failed to move because it has feared to touch the personal lives of the hearers. It has made them think of someone *else's* sin, and has sent them out shocked but self-satisfied, saying to one another: "Isn't it *dreadful* that people should do these things?" not: "God be merciful to *me*, a sinner!"

If we would convict of sin, we shall need to adapt our call to repentance to the sins of our hearers, and to touch, kindly but firmly, those very spots which each one tries to shelter.

Further; if we would make our call to repentance a power in turning men and women away from sin, it is vital to quicken their *imagination*, by showing them the results of sin. Many a life of sin would have been saved at the outset if it could have seen the course and the end of its sin. But we are most of us very short-sighted in our imaginations, and while the fascination of the foreground fills our minds, the dangers of the background are rarely noticed. So it ought to be the work of the Christian preacher to force men to lift up their eyes and look into the future, and see themselves as they will be when sin has ripened in them. I remember reading a powerful sermon by a modern

preacher, in which he pictures the young energetic business-man, who is beginning to allow his whole life to be absorbed by the passion for wealth, faced with the picture of an old crabbed miser, rich, but unloved and unlovable; and again, a girl just tending to overstep the bounds of modesty, suddenly confronted with the figure of a forlorn, broken woman of shame; and out of the silence comes a voice: "*Thou* art the man! *Thou* art the woman!" The vision brings loathing and repulsion from the sin thus unmasked; and this repulsion from the sin is the beginning of salvation.

As with personal sin, so with *social* sins. Partly, no doubt, these are the fruit of positive wickedness; but very largely they are due simply to *lack of imagination*. Many people—especially those in positions of influence—are not in personal contact with social evils—overcrowding, unemployment, sweated labour, etc.; and they simply do not realise what they mean in practice.

They see only the beginnings of the evil, in respectable sins of selfishness, thoughtlessness, unbridled love of money or pleasure—not always *unpleasant-looking* sins, in their early stages. But show them the fruit of these sins, in the lives of others—those "who sit in darkness and the shadow of death" in our great cities—and the call to social repentance will come home with new power, because it has awakened a new conviction of sin that was unrealised before.

I think that the endeavour to awaken a new conviction of sin may perhaps be helped by the great world-conflict of our day. For, though the war has created little that is new, it has revealed

much that was unnoticed before. It has thrown into sharper relief the *contrasts* of life—pain and joy, sin and love. The war is full of vivid illustrations of sin, which are in themselves a searching call to repentance.

But though repulsion from sin is a real power making for repentance, there is another power greater still ; and that is the power of *attraction*. Repulsion from sin may send a soul out and away from its old haunts ; but until it is claimed by the attraction of a new allegiance, it is but wandering aimlessly in a world without interests. And although a soul may be driven from hell by loathing, it can only be drawn to heaven by love. The condemnation of particular sins can, at most, remove the symptoms of sin ; it will not touch the source of the sins, in the “unconverted” heart.

Therefore denunciation of sin is of little value unless it is followed by the winning message of the Love of God in Christ. That is the greatest attractive-power in the world. “I, if I be lifted up,” said Christ, “will draw all men unto Me” ; and history has endorsed that claim. For the greatest of all attracting-powers is the power of love ; and in Christ we see love in action at its highest. That is why men and women who have clung close to their sins in face of every threat have yielded at length to the power of the Cross, and have turned their faces in repentance Christward and Godward. And as they have turned, they have found at the Cross the assurance of God’s forgiveness, and with the load of guilt lifted off they have gained strength to go forward along the new life.

My brothers, the preaching of Christ crucified is always the greatest power leading men to true repentance, because there is nothing so attractive as perfect self-sacrifice. Only, sometimes the attractive-power of Christ crucified is destroyed by the unattractiveness of the life through which it is preached. If the message of forgiveness comes through lips which are normally filled with words of grumbling and restless uneasiness, what wonder if it fails to carry conviction? If the call to turn from self to God is heard against the background of a life which is known to be self-centred and inconsiderate for others, what wonder if the call evokes little response?

I was listening the other day to a discussion, held in a Lancashire town, on the failure of the Church to attract the great masses of our people. And there rose up one with a wide experience of men and women of many types, and said: "I will tell you why; it is because religious people are often so unattractive." That answer is not the only one possible; but it contains enough truth to be worth pondering over.

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May I add a few plain-spoken words ere I close? To you and to me is (or will be) entrusted that "ministry of reconciliation" which must ever begin with the call to repentance. Are our lives such that we can dare to sound that call? Is your life a life turned away from sin? I do not ask, is it *sinless*? I know that mine is not. But I ask, is the deeper *undercurrent* of your life away from sin and towards Christ?

I suppose we have all felt at times the strange fascination of sin—how it seems to cast its spell over us, paralysing our will, perverting our judgment, luring us on and on, repressing every Godward prayer, which (we know) would break the spell at once—on and on—till—the thing is done, and another blot added to the escutcheon of our life. You have known that? If you have, it will give urgency to your preaching of Christ: for the soul that has felt itself under the spell of sin knows that without a Saviour it is powerless: it is a *lost soul*.

But you and I know something besides the spell of sin: we know the revulsion of feeling that often follows after the wrong act—whether it be of anger, or impurity, or dishonesty in word or deed. We start back (as it were) and stand amazed at ourselves, and marvel at and hate the very thing we did a moment ago.

Have you ever thanked God for that revulsion of feeling? If you treat it as His gift, praying Him to strengthen it and steady it, He will make it a *normal* part of your subconscious life, a safeguard to check the fascination of sin in the early moments of your next temptation.

Sometimes the reaction against a single sin is so strong that the life never seems to swerve towards sin again. But if you cannot claim this as your experience, at least ask yourself whether the repulsion from sin is or is not a *growing* power in your life. If it is not, how can you honestly bring it home to others? If it is, then other men and women will realise that as you have shared (in some form) their experience of sin, so they may share your experience of salvation.

In the same way, if you would help others to feel the attractive power of Christ, it can only be if you yourself have been drawn by that same power. For the magnetic influence of Christ lives again in a measure in the lives of those who have been magnetized by Him. Have we not all felt at times the indistinct attractiveness of a really good man or woman? It is not necessarily linked with outward grace or intellectual ability; it comes not only through the outward manner or the commonplace mind; but we are conscious that there is a power in that life which draws us away from our own and upward into the very Presence of Christ.

My brethren, we in this college are men of very various temperaments and theologicals; and I am glad that it is so for Christ needs diversities of gifts. But one thing I pray—that never a man may go forth from this place without learning to turn his face upon his own personal sin, and to turn his face toward Christ as Saviour and Lord.

For there is no greater hindrance to the cause of Christ than an unconverted priesthood—a ministry of men who repeat formulas which they have learnt by heart but have not tested by experience, telling others to tread a way of repentance which they themselves have never tried. To their people, their ministry is worse than useless—it creates the impression that Christ and His Church are parts of a religion of make-believe, unreal and artificial. To themselves, their ministry is a shame and a burden from which they would gladly be released; for even the man who is

too *weak* to repent is generally too *honest* to enjoy being a hypocrite.

I have met such men, not seldom ; and I pray God that your experience may never be as theirs. Therefore examine yourselves, brothers, ere you go out to call others to repentance, lest your message lack the ring of reality.

But if you have known the sickening horror of sin which has driven you out and away ; if you have turned your face and found your way to Christ ; if you have gone forth again with new courage, as forgiven men, to serve the God who has redeemed you—then, even though you may have your doubts and difficulties—ay, and many a stumble and many a fall—yet take up the call to repentance, and preach it by lip and life ; and the call will not be in vain.

XVIII.

A CHURCH THAT CAN OVERCOME THE WORLD.

May 7th, 1916.

I JOHN V. 4.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

"VICTORY over the world" is one of the watch-words of New Testament Christianity. The Gospel narrative leads us through the tragedy of Calvary to the triumph of Easter and the message of the Risen Christ: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"; and every subsequent book, from Acts to Revelation, tells the story of conflict and confidence and conquest.

Nor was the confidence misplaced. As the young Church began her career, from every quarter came news of victory which was overcoming the world. Here it was the story of a martyr, whose brave soul stood firm and unconquerable in face of the whole might of the world's power and punishments. Persecution might kill or maim the body, but it was powerless to crush the soul that was inspired by faith. Later on, came the news of

victory in the world of politics, where that strange unequal conflict between the contemptible little army of Christians and the whole might and majesty of Imperial Rome was being waged through the length and breadth of the Empire. And when at last, after many centuries, that conflict was ended, it was the Church which survived; the Empire had disappeared. "This was the victory which overcame the Roman world, even the Christian Faith."

In the still wider fields of human *thought*, the victory of the Faith, if less dramatic, was no less real. Slowly but surely, many of the principles taught by the Church, and laughed at (at first) by the world, came to be accepted as obvious truths by friend and foe alike. The duty of caring for the sick and the children, the recognition of the dignity of womanhood and the brotherhood of mankind—these ideas, bound up with Christ's work and message, gradually won their way to the hearts and consciences of men, and formed another witness, silent but impressive, to the overcoming power of the Faith of Christ. Not without reason was "Victory" a watchword of New Testament Christianity.

Yet somehow, in our day, "Victory" does not seem to be a watchword of the Church. It would be foolish to blind our eyes to the signs that organised Christianity, so far from being victorious, is steadily losing ground. There are, of course, exceptions—a few in the Home Church, wherever a man of singular ability is the centre of flourishing life and work; and a great number in the Mis-

sionary Church, where the conditions far more nearly resemble those of primitive Christianity. But these exceptions do not disprove the general rule that organised Christianity is either actually declining in numbers and influence, or is at any rate failing to keep pace with the rapid growth of population.

Now this decline is largely reflected in the tone and outlook of Christian people. A "victory over the world" is the last thing which the average church-goer expects or desires. If necessary, he will rally to the *defence* of the Church with doggedness and devotion; but the idea of an aggressive campaign by the Church fills him with misgivings and annoyance; and he will assure us that "it will probably do more harm than good!"* Somehow the Church at large seems to have lost all real expectation of victory over the world.

And because of this, the methods sometimes adopted by the Church are gravely at variance with New Testament standards. There is *the method of compromise and conciliation*, which seeks to accommodate the Church's message to the popular taste, to "round off" those sharp edges of New Testament teaching which are so unpleasantly piercing, to soften down the hardness of Christ's denunciations of sin; at all costs, Church teaching and worship must be made "attractive" and "agreeable." If it be true that "imitation is the sincerest flattery," I think the world must often feel flattered by the compliment paid to it by the "Church-life" of some of our parishes,

* See, for instance, the correspondence in the Church Press during the days of preparation for the National Mission.

where the aim appears to be merely to provide in the services and entertainments some agreeable items in the weekly round of social amenities. Such methods may win for the Church a measure of the world's patronage; they will certainly not win the world's allegiance, or bring a victory by which the world is overcome.

Then, on the opposite side, we can see another method, less contemptible perhaps, but not more scriptural, than the method of compromise; I mean *the policy of separation from the world*, which may be seen partly in some forms of asceticism, and partly in some forms of Puritanism. Men find the world very evil, and so they retire from the world (either into monasticism or the privacy of some exclusive sect), and leave the world to its fate. This method, too, pays a compliment to the world; for it implies that the world is too strong to be conquered, and is best left well alone. It is often noticeable that times of stress and trial tend to make men and women anxious to retire from the world; and several acute observers have predicted that the near future is likely to see a considerable increase of monastic and Puritan movements. Such methods often produce intense personal "saintliness" within their small circles; but they are not the methods of the primitive Church; they lack the faith which challenged the world to a trial of strength and carried through the combat to victory.

Now, if it is true that we have in great part lost that secret of victory which the Church of earlier days possessed, it is worth while to ask whether that secret can be recovered once more.

Let us turn again to our text: "This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith." Now, what is the meaning of "overcoming the world"? What does it mean *for us*? What is its modern equivalent in the Church of this twentieth century?

Certainly it does not mean a victory won by a military campaign, through force of arms. The failure of the Crusades brought home to most men the lesson that a *Church* which seeks to overcome its enemies by sword or force deserves thereby to forfeit its own soul, and, even when outwardly victorious, incurs the certain penalty of spiritual defeat.

Nor can the Church's victory be won by political success in these days. For a Church which joins itself to a political party sells its spiritual independence, and even if it win a sweeping victory at the polls, it finds itself thereby bound by undesirable ties of political obligation and paralysed by the din of party catchwords.

Nor can the world be overcome merely by intellectual pre-eminence. It is good that the Church and her leaders should be wise and learned; but even if the Church were recognised by the world as the greatest repository of knowledge, she would not necessarily become the world's victor. For a Church (like individual men and women) may be exceedingly wise, and at the same time exceedingly powerless in the deeper things of life.

The victories of the early Church were indeed (as we have seen) partly political and partly intellectual; but their secret lay in something deeper than politics or knowledge; and it is this "something more" which we need to recover.

Where, then, is the secret of "overcoming the world" for us modern Christians? Let me tell you of some of those who do seem to me to be overcoming the world; for we may learn it from them.

There is the man of strong independent character, able to stand firm against a wrong public opinion; clean and steady if he is in the army, resolute and honest if he is a politician, fairminded and fearless if he is a parson. Such men, who are not afraid to incur the world's condemnation and misrepresentation, are unconquerable by the world; they "have overcome."

There is the woman of brave heart and steady courage, able to remain calm and cheerful in the ups and downs of life—through sorrow and bereavement; has not her spirit proved its victorious power? Has not she learnt to overcome the world?

Or there is the sufferer on a bed of pain—it may be a soldier-lad broken beyond hope of recovery, or a young girl wasting away with an incurable disease—but looking out on life with unclouded vision and unbroken hope for the life to come; is there not here a power that the world can never give and never take away? Sometimes, even in the presence of death itself, one is intensely conscious of the victory of faith over all the forces of earth and hell.

These are those who have overcome the world; and the Church which numbers among her members strong and faithful souls such as these is a Church whose influence will grow and whose principles will spread. In her corporate witness she will be fearless and steadfast, yet at the same time generous and sympathetic; neither compromising

with the world nor standing aloof from it ; but using every opportunity to win respect and allegiance. In the strength—moral and spiritual—of her individual members lies the secret of the Church's power to overcome the world.

But St. John takes us a step further back. " This is the victory which overcometh the world, *even our faith.*" And by " our faith " St. John means our personal relationship to God ; a relationship which on our side is one of trustfulness, and on His side is one of perfect Fatherhood. For " faith " in the New Testament is always something far more than assent to a creed ; it denotes a personal contact with the Living God, a contact which brings friendship and communion through the Risen Christ.

Now, even in our human experience, friendship with someone who is *above* us—intellectually, morally, or spiritually—brings victory over the world. It is when we are in touch with a friend who has a mind of his own that we are steadied to trust our own better judgment and to refuse to swim with the tide of popular opinion. It is when we see a friend who is brave and cheerful through trouble that we are uplifted to be brave too. Often the victories by which we are enabled, in part, to overcome the world are won by our *faith* in someone else.

But how much more, when that faith is turned, not to a human life marred with sin or imperfection, but to the perfect figure of the Man who was *more* than man ? For when our trust has gone out to Him, and has brought our life into touch with His redeeming love and His risen power, then indeed our friendship with Him strengthens and

ennobles all our powers, and gives us a victory beyond our hopes.

Partly, that new strength comes from *the consciousness of the dignity of the Christian life*. To be called "the friends of God" is no light honour. Doubtless we have all read how in the days of the extension of our Empire, white men have stood brave and unflinching in the midst of hordes of savages, overaweing them by the dignity of their bearing—a dignity which sprang from the knowledge that they were the envoys, and in a measure, the friends, of the Great White King. And the Christian who knows the meaning of spiritual contact with God will always be strengthened by the knowledge that he has been called to be "a King's friend"; and that knowledge will give him the dignity and the strength of one who is prepared, if need be, to face the world's displeasure, and is confident of ultimate victory.

Further, the man who has known God is strengthened by *the memory of a great vision*. Just as the explorer, who started perhaps amid the jeers of his less adventurous comrades, but who has scaled an untrodden mountain-peak and has seen through the mists a land of mystery and beauty, comes back with his head high and his heart proud, ready to face any criticism; burning to tell, though he knows he cannot fully make it plain—so it is with the man who by faith has come into touch with God:

"O, could I tell, ye surely would believe it!

O, could I only say what I have seen!

How shall I tell, or how can ye receive it?

How, till He bringeth you where I have been?

" Whoso has felt the Spirit of the Highest
Cannot confound, nor doubt Him, nor deny ;
Yea, with one voice, O world, though thou deniest,
Stand thou on that side ; for on this am I !

" Who that one moment has the least descried Him,
Dimly and faintly, hidden and afar,
Doth not despise all excellence beside Him,
Pleasures and powers that are not and that are ?

" Ay, amid all men bear himself thereafter
Smit with a solemn and a sweet surprise ;
Dumb to their scorn, and turning on their laughter
Only the dominance of earnest eyes ? "

This is the victory that overcometh the world, even a faith such as this.

My brothers, would you win for yourselves that victorious power to stand against the world and rise above the world, which marks the Christianity of the New Testament ? Would you help, as ministers of the Church, to recover for the Church something of her ancient moral dignity and power of spiritual leadership ? Then, remember, the only way is the old familiar way of *faith*—of single-hearted trust in the almighty love of God, and in personal communion with Him who is the First and Last and the Living One. For He fought on our behalf the great battle with the world and sin and death, and He offers to us, if we will trust Him, that living power by which He Himself overcame and won the victory.

XIX.

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE.

May 21st, 1916.

EPHESIANS 1. 22 f.

"The Church, which is His Body."

THERE are two tendencies to be seen to-day in men's attitude towards the Church ; two tendencies which at first sight seem opposed to one another, and yet are often found side by side in the same person. The one is a tendency to *dissatisfaction* with the Church's present achievements ; the other is a tendency to *faith* in the Church's future possibilities.

The dissatisfaction is obvious enough, and it is needless to dwell upon it at length. It is found not only—indeed, not chiefly—with those who have little sense of loyalty to the Church, and who simply stay away from her services and organisations ; it is most keenly felt by those who are intensely earnest about their religion, and for that very reason are bitterly conscious of the contrast between the Church as she is and the Church as Christ meant her to be. It was no irresponsible outsider, but a Churchman of singular zeal and devotion,

who is said to have remarked: "I am often tempted to wonder whether the Church of England at the present moment is doing more *harm* or *good*!"

Yet the other tendency, towards a new *faith* in the Church, is no less marked; and it, too, is to be found in unexpected quarters. From Anglican and Roman, Free Churchman and Quaker, we hear witness to the great yearning for a renewal of faith in the Church of Christ. Let me quote two sentences, recently written, which express this yearning.

Here is one quotation: "It must be made clear that the Church is *central* to Christianity. . . . We must regain from the Apostolic age its passionate love for the Church, and its jealousy for the honour of the Bride of Christ. . . . The world never needed more than it needs to-day the corporate witness of a Society which lives in Him."

Here is the other: "The pledge and earnest of a new order [arising out of the present distress] is divinely given to us in the Church of Christ. The anguish of Europe will not have been in vain if the Church is born again. And there is no reason why it should not be born again if in our hearts there dawns a new vision of what God meant His Church to be."

Of these two quotations, the latter comes from an Anglican, the former from a body of young Free Churchmen; but the same spirit is manifest in both; and *both alike breathe the new faith in the Church.*

But do not let us mistake the significance of such language. It does not mean that the writers are thinking of their *own* Church, or of any one

of the existing communities of Christian people. It is rather because they are conscious of the failures and inadequacy of their own denominations that they have been driven back upon a wider faith. They have passed through the negative stage, whose creed has been described as: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, but regret that it does not at present exist!" and have come out into a new faith, which grasps that article of the Creed with enthusiasm and hope, and strives to understand more and more of its meaning and promise.

Now a renewal of faith is always attended with great dangers, as well as great blessings. A perverted enthusiasm spells superstition; and the revival of faith in the Church may easily lead—if indeed it has not already led—to absurd excesses and extravagances. So it is well to bring this renewed faith to the test of New Testament standards, in order that its development may be wise and true.

It is of course impossible this morning to discuss the whole New Testament doctrine of the Church. But its essence will, I think, be found in our text: "The Church, which is His Body."

That, then, is the New Testament ideal of the Church: "The Body of Christ." Now, what is the meaning of such a phrase? In the case of living beings, the "body" may be defined in two ways. First, from the *outward* point of view, the body of a man or animal is that part of him which other people can perceive by their senses—sight, touch, hearing. When we say that we can see or touch or hear "a man" or "an animal," we mean that we can perceive their bodies. The

mind of an animal, or the spirit of a man, are not (at least generally) to be perceived in the same way by the senses.

Then, from an *inward* point of view, the body of a living being is that part of him through which he acts upon the world. If I wish to influence any other person or thing, I nearly always use part of my body—my voice to speak with, my hand to write with or touch with—and so on. Silent prayer is perhaps an exception to this rule ; but otherwise, all our work and influence in the world is done through the mechanism of our bodies.

Further, if a body is to fulfil its proper duties and be the mechanism—the engine, if you will—through which the life works in the world, and through which the living being is recognised by those outside, it must be knit together in a *unity*, as one whole. For instance, as soon as a limb is broken entirely off from our bodies, the completeness of the body is lost ; and the separated part ceases to be part of our bodies at all, for it becomes lifeless.

There must also be *one centre of authority* in the body—and that is, the mind and will of the living being whose the body is. If, for instance, your hand refuses to move when you *will* it to move, it is for practical purposes useless ; your body is virtually lacking its hand. A body must be under one central control—the brain—or it is failing to perform its true function.

It was St. Augustine, I think, who, in a bold but striking phrase, spoke of the Universe as “ the Body of God.” It is a phrase which clearly must not be pressed too far ; it does not express the whole truth about God ; but it is magnificently

suggestive. It reminds us that in the world around us we may learn to see the Spirit of God at work. He is showing Himself to us in the dazzling beauty of fields and woods this May-time ; He is to be seen in the majesty of the mountains and the charm of the valleys, in the heave of the ground-swell or the babble of the brook ; and even the unknown stars are not outside His working ; they are a part of " His Body," knit together in the external unity of the Universe, and in the internal unity of the Spirit of the Lord who has made and who indwells heaven and earth. You will remember the stately language of the 139th Psalm :

" Whither shall I go then from thy spirit ?
Or whither shall I go then from thy presence ?
If I climb up into heaven, thou art there ;
If I go down into hell, thou art there also."

The thought here is not far from that which conceives of the Universe as " the Body of God."

But what then is the meaning of the New Testament phrase, " The Body of *Christ* " ? Now Christ is *God made Man* ; that is, the word " Christ " is more limited in its scope than the word " God." So we may expect to find that " the Body of Christ " is a phrase more limited in its scope than the whole Universe through which God's Spirit works, and more distinctively human.

Now can we, with these thoughts in mind, see more clearly the meaning of St. Paul's saying that the Church is the Body of Christ ? He means, surely, that through the Church Christ is shown to the world, and through the Church He works upon the world. And through what can Christ work so fully as through a community of men and women,

redeemed from sin, filled with the Spirit of Christ, showing Him plainly to the world, and working together under the direct control of His will? In other words, the highest and grandest ideal of the Church as the Body of Christ is that of the whole human race, knit together inwardly by the One Spirit, and expressing this unity outwardly by oneness of action and organisation. This, and nothing less than this, would completely fulfil the meaning of that great scriptural conception of the Church as the Body of Christ.

But, as we all know, it is at present only an ideal, and a somewhat remote one. Not only is the human race as a whole very far from this ideal; but even within the race there is no society which is a true picture, even in miniature, of that which Christ meant His Church to be. The communions which call themselves by the name of "Church" in our day are failing in every case to represent the ideal of "The Body of Christ."

Most of them recognise this. Some, indeed, feel the yearning for perfection so strongly that they claim it for themselves with a headlong impetuosity which demands "all or nothing!" and insists that a Church which can make mistakes is a Church without divine authority. That has been the policy (in different ways) both of the Papacy and of certain forms of exclusive Puritanism. But, unfortunately, the history—alike of Romanism and Puritanism—fails to support the claim to Infallibility or Perfection. Under these circumstances, it is surely wiser to abstain, as our own Church has abstained, from claims of this kind.

An Oxford scholar, not pre-eminent for admiration of the present condition of his own Mother Church, has said that "Whereas the Churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Rome, have erred concerning the Faith, the point about the Church of Canterbury is that it has never pretended to be right." To which another Oxford scholar has suggested the reply that perhaps that very *self-restraint* of the Church of England is a sign that she is more nearly right than other Churches whose voices are loud in the assertion of their own claims.*

Yes, it is good to recognise frankly the fact of one's own failures ; but it is never good to *acquiesce* in it. If we wish the ideal of the Body of Christ to be an uplifting and inspiring force in Christendom to-day, we must see it clearly, we must aim for it steadily, we must pray for it earnestly.

We must first study our New Testament in order to see it clearly, and in order to compare the standards we have attained with the standards Christ has set before us.

Then, having seen the ideal clearly, we must *act* accordingly. For it is not merely useless, but positively pernicious, to see a vision and then only say, "How beautiful!" The vision of the Body of Christ is not meant to arouse mere emotion, but action.

First, it should rouse us resolutely to condemn and endeavour to correct those features of modern Church-life which are unworthy—the pettiness and commercialism, the feebleness and arrogance. Often we tolerate them only because we have a low

* See Temple, "Studies in the Spirit and Truth of Christianity," p. 38.

ideal of the Church ; we should feel them intolerable if only we saw them as blemishes and scars made by man in the very Body of Christ.

Then, on the other hand, I believe the vision will help us to value *more* highly much that we have inherited in the Church. There is a real danger to-day of excessive self-depreciation, and it is well to realise that much of our Christian heritage comes to us from Christ Himself ; it is a trust to be faithfully guarded and handed on for the building-up of His Body in years to come. The vision of the Body of Christ will help to make us *strong* Churchmen—strong in our devotion to that Mother Church from whom most of us have learnt all that is best in our lives. And it will save us from that miserable pettiness of spirit which measures the strength of a man's Churchmanship by the violence of his denunciation of other Churches.

For indeed, the " Churches " are not rivals in competition for the world's favour ; but, rather, fellow-students in the great University of God's Universe, each with much to learn, each with something to contribute towards the whole Body.

So the vision of the Body should lead us to welcome all opportunities of co-operating with others in the building up of the Church that is to be. Co-operation at this time needs care and forethought ; if hastily undertaken, it may do more harm than good ; but at least we should be ready to welcome and to use every opportunity that does present itself. Especially we should watch for opportunities of joining in united *prayer* with those who are separated from us. For prayer

together breaks no "Church principles," but it does break down many barriers of prejudice and misunderstanding; and the union of hearts in the Presence of God builds a strong spiritual foundation of sympathy and love which must be the first step towards a more visible union in days to come.

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So, in conclusion, what I would say is this: As we study our New Testament, we see a great vision of the Church as the Body of Christ. The vision is very far off; we cannot expect to reach it at once, or by any easy process.

But on us—and especially on you who are to form the younger generation of Anglican clergy—there rests a great responsibility—

First, to recognise frankly and to redeem thoroughly those influences which are spoiling the witness of our own Church.

Secondly, to realise and retain those features of our Church's life which are true to the New Testament ideal, guarding them not as our own private property, but as a trust to be used for the welfare of the whole Church Catholic.

And, thirdly, to use—and, if necessary, to *make*—opportunities for co-operation among all men of goodwill, arranging to meet together in prayer and quiet conference, in order to secure a good spiritual foundation of mutual trust and understanding. Then, in days to come, our successors may be able to build on that foundation a Church that is truly One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic—a nobler "Body of Christ" than any that the world has yet seen.

XX.

THE BOUNDLESS SOVEREIGNTY OF CHRIST.

June 4th, 1916.

(Sunday after Ascension Day.)

EPHESIANS IV. 10.

"He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things."

THE Ascension of our Lord is a subject which may be approached from various sides. This morning I would single out one of these, and would ask you to think of the Ascension as *the converse of the Incarnation*.

For the Incarnation is the story of a *coming down*; it tells of One who gave up His Divine privileges, and emptied Himself, and humbled Himself, in order to share our nature. There are differences of opinion as to the exact measure of self-emptying which the Incarnation involved; but as we read the Gospel story it seems clear that our Lord was, as a rule, deliberately limiting Himself to human methods of speech and action.

And the more fully we believe in our Lord's

Godhead, the more striking does the self-restraint of His earthly life appear. We know that there are times when, even to us, human language fails to express our thoughts, and the weakness of the human body hinders and limits our action. How much more must He have felt these limitations, in whom dwelt all the fulness of God's power and wisdom !

You will remember how St. Paul describes our Lord's human life as a life of "self-emptying." St. Paul sees one great instance of this in the humiliation of the Cross of Calvary, and another (to which he refers specially in the context from which our text is taken) in the tradition that our Lord, after His Crucifixion, visited the underworld of spirits. To a Jewish mind—and St. Paul was a Jew—that visit to the gloomy realms of the dead was a supreme act of self-abasement, a sign that Christ had shared to the uttermost the darker side of human experience.

But if the Incarnation thus tells us of a "coming down," and of a voluntary acceptance by the Son of God of limitations and humiliations, surely the message of the Ascension is just the converse of this. It is the story of a "going up" ; it tells of the removal of the things which had limited and hindered, and the taking back of full glory and power.

May I take a rough illustration? You may have read how the great Earl of Shaftesbury used to spend many of his evenings among the boys of the Ragged Schools which he founded; going in amongst them to share their troubles and win their friendship. For a man cultured, intellectual,

and rather fastidious, such as Shaftesbury was, this must have involved constant self-limitation. His powers of conversation and the accomplishments of an English gentleman of high birth had no scope in such surroundings ; how much better (his friends urged him) to go into polite society, where his talents could be used to the full !

But there was another side to the picture. The other side was to be seen from time to time in the House of Lords, when the Earl was standing, a peer among his peers, to plead the cause of those whose lives he had shared to some extent, and whose troubles he knew from personal experience. There, the limitations of the Ragged School were removed ; there he had once more full scope for all the powers that God had given him, as he fought with impassioned eloquence the cause of the poor and needy, in face of the united opposition of Church and State and all respectable people.

Is not this, in part, a rough illustration of what Christ did for us ? For us men, and for our salvation, He came down and limited Himself to the conditions of our human life ; but now He has thrown off these limitations and has taken back the full extent of His Divine power, though still retaining His sympathy with and interest in those whose life He shared.

That resumption of full Divine powers is symbolised for us by the Ascension ; and so I would have us think to-day of the unlimited Lordship of Christ in His ascended life in heaven. Let us take one or two aspects of this sovereignty. It will help us to realise the greatness of Jesus Christ.

First, He is *Lord of the whole man*. It often seems to me that "religious people" appear to think that while Christ has undoubtedly a claim on their "spiritual" life, the other sides of their life—the development of intellectual ability and bodily strength—are matters entirely for their own judgment, and quite apart from "religious obligations." They would admit that to abstain from prayer and worship is an offence against God; but to neglect their minds or their bodies would be regarded by them as at most an offence against themselves; it does not occur to them that it is a matter which concerns *Christ*. Yet surely this is to limit Christ's Lordship in a way not warranted by Scripture. Even the Old Testament taught: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy *mind*, as well as with all thy soul; and St. Paul repeatedly insists that we are to present our *bodies*, as well as our souls, a living sacrifice to God.

If we realise that Christ has an unlimited right of masterhood over our whole life—body, mind, and spirit—it will teach us the gravity of certain acts which we commonly count as non-religious. Take the case of the body. If it is really the temple of the Holy Ghost, then not impurity only, but all kinds of carelessness in the matter of health are not merely acts of folly, but acts of sin against God. If we needlessly allow ourselves to fall ill, we have no right to say: "That is my own business!" It is *Christ's* business; for He needs and owns that body of ours, and if we allow it to fall into disrepair He is defrauded of His rightful service.

Or take the case of the mind. The mind has

been given to us by God to use in His service ; and it is a delicate instrument, which can be easily strained by misuse, or becomes quickly rusty if disused. There are two kinds of people who are failing to discharge their responsibility to Christ in this matter ; on the one hand those who refuse to give the mind proper rest and sleep and recreation, and who wear it out with undue pressure ; and on the other hand those who are too lazy to undertake any serious thinking, and take their opinions second-hand, repeating current phrases without troubling to think out their meaning. God has given to us men larger brains than He has given to parrots ; and He has a right to expect from our brains something better than a parrot-like readiness to repeat whatever we hear.

If our *thoughts* are to be brought (as St. Paul has taught us) into the service of Christ, let us see that we do not grudge Him time or trouble that our thoughts may be the best that we can think.

I pass to another aspect of the unlimited Lordship of Christ. He is *Lord of all human life*—social and national, as well as personal. I think we are slowly learning this lesson ; but we have yet much more to learn. We know what Christ can do for us as individuals—how He can redeem, uplift, inspire. Do we think that He is limited to this individual method, or have we faith to believe that He can do the same for the social life of the world and be the Redeemer of Human Society ?

For, remember, the social movements will be of enormous influence in the world of the near future. One result of the war will doubtless be to leave

each nation intensely self-conscious, overflowing with the spirit of patriotism and nationalism. Now patriotism can be a great power for good or for evil. If divorced from the sense of moral and religious obligations, it easily becomes mere national aggressiveness. Most of us believe that the present distress is due in large part to the spirit of perverted patriotism among the Central Powers of Europe. Yet patriotism can be a splendid thing—an inspiring power to draw the best from men and uplift them to heights of honour and service undreamt of.

“Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
‘This is my own, my native land!’
Whose heart hath ne’er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned,
From wandering on a foreign strand?”

Two spirits—one from God and one from the devil—are at work in the patriotism of the nations to-day; we can see them at work even in our own land; and the whole future of England depends on the *kind* of patriotism which becomes prevalent amongst us. Patriotism, of a kind, there is sure to be; but will it be of the insolent, aggressive type, which finds vent in denunciations and complaints; or will it be of the kind which warms men’s hearts with love of the Mother-land, and makes them ready to give and be spent for her sake?

One of the greatest needs of the future will be the redemption of the spirit of patriotism from its baser allies, and its ennoblement by the Spirit of Christ. Is your faith in the Ascended Christ big enough to believe that He can do this? Can you

trust Him to redeem, not only patriotism, but the other great factors in the social life of to-day—our party-system, our class-interests, our Church organisations, cleansing and renewing them by His work on Calvary ?

If so, what will that faith involve ? It will certainly not involve abandoning the old method, sanctioned by Christ Himself, of striving to win and convert individual souls. If we are ever tempted to put aside that primary, but very hard, work of individual soul-winning, and to content ourselves with vague discussions about “ burning questions,” we have gone very far from the methods of Christ. The Gospel must come first to the individual soul and change it. But if we believe Christ to have boundless sovereignty over human society, we shall recognise that the redeemed soul is not free to live to itself ; its duty is, not only to win other souls directly, but also to help (as we all can help) to create a Christian “ tone ” in nation, party, class, and Church. For such a “ tone,” if really Christian, becomes a redemptive power of enormous value for the generations that are to come.

Without that redemptive power of Christ, the outlook for the future is very dark indeed.

“ For we have kept for selfish ends
The gifts we freely have received ;
Or made the chosen few our friends,
And cared not if the many grieved.

“ Forgive the mutual mistrust
And pride that sunder class from class ;
Forgive, O Father, the disgust
That makes us shun the struggling mass.

" Forgive our narrowness and hate,
So quick love's limits to define,
Our unbelief that will not wait,
But seeks a shorter way than Thine.

" Give understanding, Prince of Peace,
To follow Thy redemptive plan ;
That wars throughout the world may cease,
And man be reconciled to man."*

Once more, the ascended Christ is *Lord of all the world*. The dweller in the plains generally has a limited view, bounded by any little rising-ground in the near foreground ; but the climber who is ascending the mountain-slope finds that every step seems to remove some of these limitations, and the lower hills that once barred the view seem to have sunk into insignificance below him. And the Ascended Christ has the widest of all outlooks ; He can see at a glance the whole of God's world ; and not one part of it is outside His sovereignty—except where sin has lodged in the heart of man.

When we are immersed in the tangle and bustle of life it is very easy to forget that the Ascended Christ is the Lord of all the world. In practice, we are all of us inclined at times to act as if our own circle, or our own parish, were the whole of the Universe—at least all of it that matters—and to ignore the rest of the world. The result is, often, a lack of the sense of proportion ; an undue excitement over little things, and a failure to realise the great things that are going on in the world.

The true remedy for this is the missionary spirit, which tries to look at the whole world, as Christ

* C. F. Angus, in the *Student Movement Magazine*, April, 1916.

looks at it, as one great brotherhood under the One Fatherhood of God. This missionary outlook will not take away from our interest on the work at home. You will find, on the contrary, that the missionary-hearted parish is almost invariably strong in its home organisations. But the missionary outlook helps us to see our work, wherever it lies, as part of a vast whole, which is all knit together in allegiance to the One Head. It will help us, in our own life-work, to seek to go wherever the *need* is greatest—whether it be at home or abroad, in college or parish, among the labouring people or the leisured classes.

Lastly, the Ascended Christ is *Lord, not only of all this world, but of all worlds*, unseen as well as seen. Again, we admit this in theory; but in practice . . . ? How often we Christians speak of physical death as if it really involved the final “loss of life” ! But if Christ is the Lord of the Unseen, then surely death is far from being the worst of all evils. A long life of degraded selfishness is far more lamentable than a brave life cut short at the outset on earth; for the latter goes forward clean and strong to a new life in the Presence of the Lord. I often think that in God’s sight the slow grinding misery of the slum must be more painful than the swift deadly work of bullet or shell; for these latter may kill the body, but (in most cases) leave the soul unscathed; while the pitiless oppression of hopeless poverty slowly crushes out hope and faith and love, and leaves only a maimed soul to pass into the other world. If we really trust Christ as “Lord of the other side,” then death is but a Great Adventure, which we undertake under the

guidance of a friend. It is a voyage of exploration into the Unknown, but not into hostile territory ; for Christ is Lord *there* as well as here.

So it seems to me that the war, with its message of death, calls us to a stronger faith in Christ as the Lord of Life, and in the Eternal Life which He promises to those that trust Him.

Indeed, on every hand we are bidden, in these days, to renew our faith in the *greatness of Jesus Christ*. The times are dangerous ; but Christ is an inspiring leader for dangerous times. For He has shown Himself, in history and in Christian experience, to be the Lord of boundless power and of boundless Love.

All down the centuries Christian men and women have testified to this ; and on this point their witness has agreed together. Listen to the voice of the first century, as it comes to us with apostolic enthusiasm :

“I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life ; nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord !”

Or hear the testimony of one who, well-nigh twenty centuries later, has echoed the same message :

“Yea, thro' life, death, thro' sorrow and thro' sinning,
Christ shall suffice me, for He has sufficed ;
Christ is the end, as Christ was the beginning ;
Christ the beginning, and the end is Christ !”

